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Youth and Chastity

by
DR. TIHAMER TOTH

Professor at University
of Budapest

St. John's Seminary Library
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Translation: by Stephen Chapkovich
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Edited by REV. L. W. FORGAGH
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FOREWORD.

My dear young man :

The school year has scarcely opened when students begin to visit me. Newcomers knock at the door timidly; my older acquaintances with assurance.

They sit at my desk and in the retirement of my room reveal the secret hopes and aspirations of their youthful souls.

When they disclosed to me their trifling troubles which they, however, regarded as immensely crushing; when they sobbed out their numerous little sorrows which they took in deadly seriousness; when they placed their young souls with their worries and profound problems in my hand, and when then their wide-open eyes said with eager thirst: "Advise me, what shall I do?"—at such times, in those inspired moments, did I learn to realize that the soul of every boy is a diamond mine of immeasurable value, a promise for the future, charged with unlimited possibilities to assist in the proper development of which is not only the sacred duty of us adults, but also comes to us as a great honor.

My dear young man, they who do not occupy themselves with the problems of youth little know what a multitude of questions, struggles, and—alas, also fatal falls may accompany the unfolding of your impulse-racked soul, and in the storms of youth, how much is the craft of your soul in need of guidance by an experienced hand!

When on such occasions I endeavored to give strength in the struggles you were complaining of, to calm your agitated soul, to advise you in your perplexities, to reach a hand when you were fast in tangled weeds—my vision was not only of one particular pupil sitting there, but that the keen eyes of thousands of young men were fixed upon my soul; of young men

everywhere who were wrestling with the same earnest questions, yet who perhaps had no one to turn to for an answer, for consolation, advice, enlightenment, and so forlorn and single-handed, were left to fight the hard battles of those critical years of youth.

The writing of this book was prompted by these reflections. Well aware of the feeble effect produced by dead, printed letters compared with that of the living word, I still thought it might not be entirely useless to gather together in book form what came to my mind during discussions with my students.

I do not know your name. I do not know where you go to school, whether it be public or high, technical, commercial or normal; perhaps you are already in the university. One thing alone I know about you: you are a student, bearing within your soul the future destiny of your country, having very serious problems to face to the perplexities of which it is our most sacred duty to give an earnest answer. For there is no task in life more sublime than offering to thirsty souls a drink from the eternal springs of Truth. To lay the foundation of an empire cannot be of greater merit before humanity, to build churches cannot be more pleasing in the eyes of God than by our counsel to prevent the downfall of just one single youthful soul, a "living temple" of God.

Every word, every letter of this book has been dictated by the greatest love for your soul, and by a conviction that to imbue a young soul with high ideals is a task replete with eternal values. This love deserves in return that you on your part reflect seriously upon its contents.

For the time and labor bestowed upon this book I shall look for no greater reward than to hear that even one young man has found a helpful guidance in its pages, and that it has kept the spiritual formation of one young person upon the right path.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE TWO LAKES.

IN my school days I often used to visit a certain mountain lake. The sunbeams danced merrily on the beautiful crystalline mirror. The denizens of the lake glimmered prettily as they gambolled gleefully in its gravelled bed. Little fish darted swiftly to and fro, as though unable to restrain their joy in the pleasant sunshine.

Blue-eyed forget-me-nots dreamed lazily on the shore, and water lilies with their sharp sword leaves stood steadfastly on guard. Willows bowed in dignity over the bright mirror of the water, and amused themselves in the cloudless, smiling sky reflected on its surface. A fresh, invigorating breeze played amongst the branches, and, at its breath, bulrushes whispering softly, nodded to one another. This mountain lake was like the smiling, happy soul of a child, exuberant with vitality—like the wide-open, sparkling eye of a child. . . .

Not long ago—after a stretch of many years—I again passed this place.

With dismay I saw what a change my lovely lake had undergone. It had become a yellowish-green swamp, covered with duckweed. Its water was troubled and dirty. Because of the thick growth of weeds, one could not see what it hid, but the putrid odor which it exhaled betrayed its rotten state. One could hear the sleepy croaking of bulge-eyed frogs in its miry bottom. At my approach loathsome creatures, in alarm, splashed into the weedy stagnant water.

What had become of the proudly-watching sworded lilies?

What had become of the fronds of the swaying willows?

What had become of the smiling skies mirrored on the surface of the lake?

All, all had vanished. Useless rush growth had cropped up along the shore, and worthless reeds swayed weakly with every little breeze. There was rottenness, loathsomeness and decay everywhere.

The sight cut me to the heart. Had this once been the beautiful, crystal lake of my boyhood?

* * *

Every boy's eyes are like the forget-me-nots of a dewy morning, and his soul like a beautiful mountain lake.

But later—how many youthful souls turn into a weedy, fetid swamp.

To you, my dear young man, I have written this book, that your soul may always remain pure like crystal.

I. CHAPTER

THE PLAN OF THE CREATOR.

FOR countless ages the earth sped on its orbit around the sun, while seething lava still smouldered in its interior, and with terrible hissing broke through the hard outer crust. But the process of cooling out steadily progressed.

Then green, dense forests appeared in luxuriance over the whole face of the earth. Dazzling, gorgeous, they bloomed each spring. Joyous birds trilled their songs and winged their way in the tender embrace of soft zephyrs. Everywhere were life, vigor and straining energy. . . . But something was still wanting, still unborn.

Something, or rather, somebody. There was no one to whom the birds could sing, for whom the flowers could bloom and the trees bear fruit. The rational, conscious being, who was to absorb in his eager soul all this vast beauty was still non-existent—the being who was to be, not merely a component part of Nature's great mechanism, but one invested with the faculty of consciously appreciating and enjoying Nature: the song of birds, the purling of brooks, the flow of scents, the rustling of trees, the whispering of winds, the humming of bees, the dignity of white-capped mountain tops—the being who would, on wings of gratitude, lovingly elevate his soul, intoxicated with the beauties of majestic Nature, to the Creator of All—that being, man, was still unborn.



THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN.

FINALLY, the time came when God created the first human couple, one man and one woman.

Men and women are of different sexes, and although each is a complete being in itself, yet they have mutually to complement each other. In the two sexes taken together God has wholly realized the concept of "man". Each sex possesses its own peculiar characteristics, but the real concept of "man" is only arrived at if man and woman supplement each other.

A man's characteristic faculty is his creative activity which calls for courage and ever-readiness to act. His will is strong, his character firm, he is persevering in his resolutions. He considers it pleasure if he can brace himself with a set jaw confidently defying the oncoming storms of life. Woman would be overcome and beaten down in this struggle for existence. She finds her best footing for life in the softer surroundings of the family circle, where she can look after her home and children with infinite love and ceaseless devotion, and can turn into smiles the preoccupied look of her husband coming home from work. Her creative abilities are not as extensive as those of her husband, but her patience and perseverance are greater. God gave humanity great food for thought by creating two sexes. The inexhaustible charm of family life, conjugal and filial love, even homesickness, and love for one's country, too, are founded on difference in sex.

So our world has a use for both man and woman. The contrast of man's strength and woman's tenderness presents a symmetrical balance. The world

needs, besides man's ardent resoluteness, the love, beauty, and deeper feeling of woman. The two sexes are inseparably dependent upon each other. For this reason, right at the beginning, God placed the first woman beside the first man, and created the first family.

THE PLANS OF THE CREATOR.

BUT besides all this, in creating the two sexes, God had much deeper and holier plans. With the duality of sexes, He bestowed upon man and woman creative power. It was His will that they take over a part of His creative work, namely to repair the breaches made by Death, by ceaselessly bringing new offspring into life. This was God's magnificent, mysterious plan in ordaining the State of Marriage. By the intention of God, therefore, we are to look upon a boy and a girl unfolding in pure intactness, as the embodiment of the divine, creative thought.

All of you have learned at school that God Himself directly created the first two human beings on earth, Adam and Eve. But, sooner or later, the thought will occur to every boy, "Who then has created all the other people? God has not created them directly, how, then, did they come on earth—how did I come on earth? How are little children born into the world?"

This is a serious question, and sooner or later it will intensely excite the interest of every boy. I much prefer to explain these things to you myself, than that you be driven to seek information from undesirable sources.

Hear me then, my young man. Probably you know very well that the scientists classify all that has been created in the world into two groups: into organic beings and inorganic matter. Those beings which belong to the first group (plants, animals, men) God has not only created, but has also endowed with a part of His own creative power. Plants produce new plants, animals new little ones, and little children are born to men.

To inorganic bodies (sun, stars, minerals, mountains, seas) God has not given this procreative power. Why? Because these do not perish as easily as living beings, so it was not necessary for them to bring offspring into the world, and thereby offset their own extinction. All organic beings, however, do possess this power. Fish, birds, trees and plants, animals and men, all perish, grow old, and become extinct by the millions from year to year. Now, if this were to go on continually and no new beings were to replace them, life on earth would eventually cease. It is true, I grant, that God might have continued personally and directly to create new beings. His mysterious Holy Will, however, has accomplished something more wonderful. He has endowed all living creatures with the power by which they themselves can give new life, and this He did in such a mysterious way that not even the most learned scientists have so far been able to fathom the secret.

Have you ever noticed, my young man, in winter time, the buds of sleeping trees resting in scarcely perceptible seclusion? Each bud is the source of a new sprout, a new flower, a new fruit, and a new

little tree. They are only waiting for the kiss of spring sunshine to wake them into joyous life, budding, sprouting and blooming. The flowers receive visits from roving insects and from fresh breezes. The winds carry on their wings, and the bees on their feet the pollen of the male flower, scattering it on the pistils of the female flower. One might say that in the moment the pollen touches the pistils the flowers become united in mutual love. The fertilized pistil begins to grow, to develop, till at last, in a few weeks or months, the ripe fruit is smiling on the tree, and the fruit contains new seed, the germ of a new life, a new tree.

In this manner does our Creator provide for the incessant renewal of Nature.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

IN exactly the same manner did God provide for the renewal and preservation of humanity. He gave to men generative procreating power, a mysterious, essentially divine power through which they can bring new life, new people into the world. In the man He deposited the generative power, the seeds of life, and in woman tiny life germs, in order that from the union of the two, new existence, new men, may issue. This procreative power, these life seeds, these germs are slumbering unperceived within the child, just as the buds of a tree in the cold of winter. But the spring of life will come when the boy changes into a fully developed man, and the little girl into a grown woman. When the animating sunshine brightens the days, the young man falls in love with the maiden, takes her in mar-

riage, and in the warmth of love, the two souls and the two bodies, in very truth become fused and united. And this bodily union does not only thrill the twain with delight, but its effect upon the human germ hitherto slumbering within the wife, may be likened to the kiss of the gallant Prince upon the brow of the Sleeping Beauty in the wood. In this moment this tiny human germ begins to live, and the little human bud to sprout and to grow, and when, after nine months it is strong enough to fall out, as the fruit from its shell, it breaks off from the nourishing veins of its mother, and we say, "A little



baby has been born"—a new little one, another human being, which, in all its smallness, is neither the father nor the mother, but a combination of both, a third human being, whose future destiny has in many respects been pre-determined by the past life of its parents, whether that life were one of integrity or of sinful dissipation.

MOTHER AND SON.

JUST listen to this intimate talk which took place between a boy and his mother, who frankly answered her son's questionings rather than that he should turn to foul-mouthed companions for "enlightenment".

"Dear Mum," asked a teen age boy of his mother, "What size was I when I was very small?"

"When you were very small? Oh, you were very small indeed, like a dot. Smaller than the head of a pin. You could have been seen only through a magnifying glass."

"Goodness!" replied the boy, "Why, in that case anybody might have crushed me to death!"

"Yes, that's true!" responded the mother. "All living beings are just tiny little dots, little germs, like seed in the beginning, which have to be hidden in the soil to give them protection when they start to grow. And, you see, the good God took care of you, too, that no harm came to you while you were so small. He made a place for you in my own body, under my heart, a soft, warm, protected place, where you could grow and develop in safety."

"And could I eat there, and breathe, Mother?"

"All this I did for you. During the time you were there I ate more than usual, in order to gain strength and to share my strength with you. What I ate was changed into blood in my body, and my blood flowed to you and nourished you."

"How did you know, Mother, that I was living in that protected place?"

"How did I know? My dear boy, of course I knew. Sometimes you began to stir, and then I would talk to you: 'Good morning, my little one! Are you awake? Your mother is awake, too, and is thinking of you. Just grow and increase in strength, so that when you become strong enough you may come out from your sheltered place and be the joy of my heart.'

"Now!—you look at me with wide-open eyes as if you had never known this. You knew, though you did not understand. Don't you know what we say every day in 'Hail Mary' when we pray together: ". . . . and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus' Do you see? As an apple is the fruit of a tree, just so is a little child the fruit of its mother. A little child is, however, more valuable than the apple. Therefore God takes much greater care of it. Because of this the child is hidden for a long time in that soft, warm, protected place under its mother's heart."

"And how long did I live, there, dear mother?"

"You ought to know this, too. Just let me think . . . on what day is the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the angel announced to her that she would bear a son? Yes, it is on the 25th of March. And when do we cele-

brate the birthday of the Child Jesus? On the 25th of December. What interval lies between these two dates? Nine months. You know, too, the day of the Conception of the Virgin Mary. It is the 8th of December, and her birthday? The 8th of September. Again we find nine months between these dates. Now you see, all this you have heard before, you just didn't think about it, and I didn't speak about it until now that you are a big boy. Now you know! But don't ever talk about these things to other boys. Even adult people ought not to mention them without good reason. Why not? Because these are very sacred and sublime things, and if people are not wary about sacred and beautiful things these become easily soiled.

"And during those nine months I prayed very fervently, as I wanted you to become a devout, God-loving child. I was always smiling and cheerful, because I wanted you to be of such disposition. So you grew and increased in strength. Then, when you became sufficiently strong, one day the door of your sheltered place opened up, and you came forth; in other words, you were born. In truth it caused me great suffering, but what did I care! When your lungs commenced to breathe, you began to yell and cry, to kick about . . . they put you in my arms. I pressed you to my heart, I cried, too, for very joy, and kissed you again and again, and . . . now you know, my little boy, why I love you so much."

"Yes, mother, and I know, too, why I love my mammy better than anyone else in the world," said the boy, and tears glistening in his eyes, he embraced his mother tenderly.

SACRED EARNESTNESS.

IF we reflect a little we cannot but be overcome by feelings of deepest emotion and admiration for God's magnificent conception. God did not wish to create all men fully developed as Adam and Eve. For, how different, how strange, cold and desolate would be the world around us if things were otherwise than they are. The family would be entirely out of the question, since a family consists of father, mother and children; we should have no family, no mother, neither sisters nor brothers, nor relatives. Everyone would stand alone in the world. In such a world people would not love and regard one another, there would be no one to share our joys, no one to turn to in our cares and troubles.

There would be no children in the world. How impossible! Everyone would be Mr. So-and-so and Mrs. So-and-so, grown up men and women. Homes would not re-echo with the pealing laughter of happy children, and unknown would be the thousand sweet, carefree joys of childhood.

Lo, how ineffably loving was God in that He of all means, chose this one to insure the preservation of humanity. Directly, He created only the first humans, one man and one woman; and to these two, and through them, to all others, He handed over a minute part of His creative power, the ability to give bodily life to their successors.

Behold! *how admirable, how holy, how sublime the plan of the Creator!* How very adorable His will by which He permits man to participate in the work of the continued regeneration of humanity—in this truly creative work. This being so, how absolutely obligatory is, at the same time, His earn-

est command, that those physical organs with which His wise Providence supplied men for the purpose of continual reproduction of their kind, they should use for that sole purpose which He determined, and then only within the limits which He marked out from the beginning, within the indissoluble marriage contracted by man and woman.

The most sublime and sacred power in all Nature is the power of giving life. In the natural order, man, too, possesses this power of giving life to new little humans, but as man's soul elevates him into boundless heights over all other creatures, he must spiritualize this creative power of his by an earnest observance of moral laws, and thus sublimate it from the world of matter into the world of spirit. We should part with our greatest privilege, our reasoning faculty, if there should be one single manifestation in our physical life which we did not refine with conscious idealism and thereby elevate above merely animal activities.

Therefore, my young man, you must always think of this genital organ as something sacred; you should never listen to ambiguous conversations about it, neither should you yourself talk indecently about it. Don't look at it, don't touch it without necessity, and keep it always clean. You would harm your lungs, your brains, your heart, if you touched them (in case you could gain access to them); therefore, you must not needlessly touch or excite this organ, be it from play or carelessness. Because, the Creator's plan is that everyone, without exception, has to preserve his body and soul in immaculate purity until the time of marriage. If, however, one does not enter marriage, be it in the

interests of a higher purposes—as for example a Catholic priest in the interest of saving souls, or some great scientist in the interest of his profession, he should live a chaste life until death.

God, therefore, permits the union of the sexes solely within the restrictions of the law instituted by Him, within the indissoluble bonds of marriage entered for life, and even there, only for the purpose of participating in His creative work. Should anyone use this physical organ in any other way, either himself alone or with others, for gaining pleasure and delight, he would commit a grievous sin against himself and against society as a whole, against human nature, and against the Holy Will of his Creator.

The question may occur in some boys' minds, "How is it that sexual life is a good and sacred thing within marriage, and outside marriage is bad, and so great a sin? How does it come? A thing is either always a sin or not a sin."

The answer is easily found. God created the genital organs, the sexual instinct and sexual life. Therefore that instinct is sacred, and the badness lies not in its practice—what God created cannot be bad—but in the badness of man who practises it *at such time and under such circumstances* that God does not permit. It is clear as the day that God's will is that this instinct may only be gratified within the bonds of marriage, and even there, only in such manner that children may be born.

"Why did God so ordain?" someone may further ask. "Why," might be the answer, "God is the Supreme Lord. He cannot be called to account for

the way He administers His laws." One who constructed a machine knows best what it requires in order to give good service and not go out of commission. Man has been conceived and created by God, so it follows that He would best know how men should conduct themselves in order to escape corruption.

If we but reflect a little, we shall soon realize to what extent human interests benefit from this strict command of God, i.e., that He will permit sexual intercourse only in marriage. Only in marriage does the satisfying of the sexual instinct not mean mere pleasure seeking, but the sprouting of new human buds, and the rearing of children, whose careful bringing up can be provided for only in an indissoluble marriage.

In the last analysis, then, we arrive at the truth, that even the State and Society could hardly exist if God had not confined the practice of sexual intercourse exclusively within the indissoluble marriage bond.

He, then, who satisfies his sexual instinct outside marriage by either touching his own body in order to excite immoral delight, or by sexual intercourse with a woman, and touching her without having previously bound her to himself for life at the altar—that person is an executioner of his own and other people's happiness.

SINFUL BLUNDERING.

THERE is hardly one among the gifts of God which ungrateful man has not turned to bad use; and we have to say with great sadness, that there is perhaps no other plan of God, the

original purpose of which man has so distorted as the chaste relations between man and woman.

The bursting forth of new life is everywhere and always greeted with great rejoicing. Think of Nature's rebirth in the coming of Spring! How the nightingale trills, how the wind whispers, how the bee hums, how the brook purls, how everything delights in the flow of life.

That God associated sexual intercourse of man and woman with a sensation of delight He did only for the purpose of inducing man willingly to shoulder the many sacrifices accompanying the procreation of the race and the rearing of children.

God's plan stands before us quite clear, the union of a man and a woman *within indissoluble marriage for the purpose of perpetuating the human race*. Opposed to this plan, as darkness is opposed to light, there are thousands and tens of thousands of false prophets, theatre plays, cinemas, pictures, photographs, novels, news articles, books announcing and expounding to society that men and women before entering family life, and later, without founding a family, either alone or with others, have a right to enjoy those physical pleasures, which according to the plan of the Creator, they *ought to experience only in the sanctuary of family life*.

My dear young man, I am afraid that you too may not have the moral stamina to turn a deaf ear to these alluring voices.

At your age of thirteen or fourteen, your youthful body commences to develop at an ever increasing rate. The development of your mind keeps pace, and your increased power of observation will enable

you to perceive how corrupted have become, through levity, so many manifestations of our social life. On roads and by-roads, on streets, in the theatre, in books, in the company of your friends, everywhere you will be faced with the shameful derision of the Creator's plans. Temptations will obtrude themselves upon you. Indecent books may come into your hands, you may be taken to indecent theatres to see frivolous plays, you may stray into bad company, and what is more—I am writing these lines with trembling hands—boys in their tender age, perhaps even before they have reached their teens, are often initiated by their companions into indecent practices in which their developing organism later finds temptation. Many a boy has thus fallen a victim to the vice of an evil companion. Friends will come to see you and talk to you with unclean mouths about these exciting physical pleasures, about the origin of life, about the birth of babies. Many of your friends may be already contaminated by this terrible curse of our age, a curse which debases the sublime plans of our Creator to depths where they become the means of detestable abominations.

THE SACRED MYSTERY.

YOU realize now how pitiable are these friends of yours, for if they knew the high purpose designed by God as the goal of man's sexual instinct, they would not talk about it with such insolent rudeness.

Judge for yourself, my young man, what low thinking, what a degraded mentality it takes to crack

swinish jokes about sacred things, and to grin broadly at their mention.

“Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost who dwells within you?” asks the Holy Scripture (Cor. 1. 6, 19). In a church every place is sacred, so is every part of our body holy, as it came from God. There is, however, a place in every church which is especially holy, the Tabernacle, wherein the Blessed Sacrament, our Lord Himself, dwells, and which may be approached only with bowed head and on bended knee. In the human body, too, there is a particularly mysterious part, the organ in which an atom of the creative power of the Almighty is dwelling, to which even our thoughts should be directed only with the greatest reverence.

The more reverently you regard this sacred creative power, the sexual power awakening within you between the age of fourteen to sixteen, the more you become conscious of the fact that by the will of God the life of whole generations, their happiness, and your homeland's future, is slumbering within your body, the less will you permit yourself to think or to treat of it with levity; you will not even speak of it.

Regeneration is a mystery throughout nature, a profound, sacred mystery. Wherever there is a process of new life beginning we see a veil spread by God. The butterfly covers itself with its chrysalis at one of its stages of change. No one sees it. And who has ever seen how the seeds germinate? Nobody. Deep below the surface of the soil they sprout into life. Who has ever seen how the purple

amethyst and the fiery ruby crystallize within the undisturbed silence of mysterious rock bed depths? The genesis, the birth, the horizon of life, is everywhere a mystery. In vain is man's searching to find the origin of life. Even the greatest scientist knows that at the end of his researches he stands upon the threshold of a sealed sanctuary. Another step—and he would face God.

Behold this majestic mystery that bad companions would pry into with their filthy tongues. They make this impulse to serve the regeneration of humanity (a holier and more profoundly majestic idea perhaps even the Creator could not conceive)—this they make the subject of their careless, frivolous caperings and pleasure seeking, and the butt of their swinish jokes.

Now, however, you know how sublime a calling the future is holding in store for you. You know that in time to come, when according to the plans of God you will enter marriage, you will be a life giver to human buds, You are aware of the responsibility which rests upon your shoulders, and demands that *until that sacred moment you must preserve the energies of your body in intactness and your organism in unwasted strength.* You know that the gratification of your instincts outside marriage is a desecration of your human dignity. You know that although there is a father or a mother hidden in every boy and girl, he who does not lead a chaste life before marriage will hardly be able to remain faithful and virtuous during marriage. The destiny of whole generations depends on your present decision, that when the time comes you will, with

unsoiled purity, enter the ranks of the Creator's workmen.

A tree's roots hide themselves in the silent depths of the soil, and thence send their animating life-giving sustenance into the trunk and branches, but if we uproot the tree in the sun, it will dry up. Adolescence, the process of the ripening of the sexual faculty, should also run its course in like mysterious silence, in sacred awe concealed from every curious look and thought.

Keeping this in mind, you will not, out of curiosity, talk with your friends about these hidden things, for things that God's wisdom has hidden from us ought not to be brought into the sun. Neither will you listen to the voices of seducers in whatever literary or artistic form or disguise they may approach you. For you know too well the fate of the wanderer who follows the luring will-o'-the-wisp, flickering pale-blue over the rotting swamp! He perishes without hope of rescue. You will now value much better that organ mentioned before, instead of abusing it, contrary to God's plan, for satisfying animal desires. It is a truth that in youth, you not only build or ruin your own life, but also that of coming generations. The development of the life-seed, as yet only ripening within you, will be given a good or a wrong direction by your own conduct. The continence and moral purity which you practise in youth will, in your manhood, bring a blessing upon your future family. Do not forget that legions of nervous, sickly, blind-born, imbecile, crippled children, and countless numbers of criminals and lunatics, curse the sins and dissipations of their parents, committed in their youth.

Your present honest good-will, your sober qualities of discernment, will—alas!—be put to test by a thousand and one temptations of youth and the world. Books, pictures, theatre plays, movies, advertisements, picture post cards, smutty magazines, vaudeville, comic opera, display windows of book-stores, will set upon you and shout into your ears, “Don’t be so sanctimonious, don’t wait for marriage, don’t be faithful in marriage, but gain as many bodily pleasures and sensual delights as you can, and everywhere you can.” In this unbalanced world you will scarcely hear anything else, but that lust is the only worthwhile object in life. You will stand with reeling senses in this topsy-turvy hubbub of the market-place. You will not know what to do, what your mentality should be, what course to take.

You will have arrived at the crossroads, the critical stage of deciding the whole course of your life. And the question will loom up before you, the question which awaits importunately an answer: whither shall I go?

II. CHAPTER

WHICH WAY TO GO.

HAVE you ever heard the story of Hercules, the greatest hero of Greek mythology? He was an embodiment of manly strength and courage. He was only a baby when his enemy wanted to destroy him, putting two snakes in his crib, but the strong child strangled them. His life was full of heroic deeds. It was he who killed the Hydra of Lerna. It was he who tamed the Minotaur of Crete. It was he who defeated the Amazons. It was he who cleaned out the Stables of Augeas. It was he who took the golden apple of the Hesperides . . . and yet this hero of the fable could not escape the trial, which, it is true, no man ever escaped. Once in his life he too stood upon the crossroads, when he had to make a decision as to which road to choose, which way to go?

ON THE CROSSROADS.

IT happened when passing from youth to manhood. Once, being alone, suddenly two women appeared to him. One of them began to speak to him. "I see you are hesitating, Hercules, which way to go. If you choose me for your friend I will lead you along a pleasant road where you will find only pleasure and no hardship. Your only concern will be what to eat, what to drink, and how to gratify your senses. If you will be mine you will enjoy every happiness without toil and care." Here Hercules interrupted her: "Woman, what is your name?" "My friends call me Happiness," answered



the woman, "and my enemies call me Sin." Then the other woman spoke: "I don't want to fool you," she began, "I will tell you frankly that the Gods will never grant Greatness and Goodness without toil and care. If you will follow me you will have to work hard. If you wish to be glorified by the whole of Greece on account of your virtues, you must endeavor to be of service to the whole country. If you wish your land to yield good crops you must cultivate it well. If you wish to become a great warrior, you must learn this craft from the experienced. If you wish to gain in physical strength, you must make your body obey your mind, that it may bear hardship and labor."

Here Sin interposed. "Do you hear, Hercules, what a terrible road this woman wants to take you along, and on what an easy path I could lead?" "You wicked creature," exclaimed Virtue, "What good can you bestow? Do you possess any happiness at all? You do nothing to gain it. You eat before getting hungry, you drink before getting thirsty. In Summer you long for snow and ice. You desire sleep, not that you have done anything worthwhile, but because you have done nothing. You impel your followers to make love before their nature has any need of it, and you desecrate Nature with sexual excesses. You accustom your devotees to loathsome practices at night, and let them sleep through the better part of the day. Although you are immortal, the Gods have ousted you from their circle, and good people despise you. Your young friends of tender age ruin their bodies, your older friends lose the soundness of their minds. In their youth they indulged in pleasures to surfeit, and now

in their old age they drag themselves along with groans. They are ashamed of their past actions, and they are depressed with fatigue. I, on the contrary, live among the Gods, and good men like my company. Without me no noble deed has ever been performed. Gods and men both respect me. Artists regard me as their helpmate, and fathers as the custodian of their homes. My followers enjoy their food and drink, for they use it when it is needed. Their sleep is sweeter than that of the idle, and yet they never shirk their duties because of it. Their friends hold them in esteem, their country honors them. And when the end comes, they do not sink into oblivion, but their glorious memory will ever live on the lips of future generations.

“Hercules, offspring of noble parents, if you follow my counsel you shall attain eternal glory.”

This is the story as I read it in the work of an ancient Greek writer, Xenophon, entitled “*De Cyri Expeditione*,” Vol. III, and here I have put it down for you, my young man, for undoubtedly you too will once stand on the crossroads, when you will become aware of that most true pronouncement of the Holy Scripture, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary to one another.” (Galat. 5, 17.)

THE BOY BECOMES A YOUNG MAN.

SINCE you were fourteen years old, or perhaps even before, you became aware of new remarkable things within yourself. Queer changes made themselves felt in your body and soul; new occurrences, new ideas, new aspirations, heretofore

unknown desires are awakening within you. You are like the juice of the grape commencing to ferment in order to turn into strong wine. The age of transition is dawning upon you; the ignorant child in you is transforming himself into a self-conscious young man.

This important development causes changes which shake up and take hold of even the most minute particles of your being. I would almost say that the child passing away in your inner life is struggling with the young man to be born. In the Springtime of your life a fiery blood throbs in your veins, stirring up thoughts and desires just as the straining energies of life burst forth in the branches of sleeping trees, and the effervescent flow of sap stretches and opens up the buds.

And you? Half confused, and feeling ashamed, you are looking into your soul, and into this turbulent jumble of new sensations, and you have the feeling of the presence of a stranger within yourself. A feverish restlessness possesses you, as that felt by migratory birds in early Fall. Is it not true?

YOUR SYSTEM IS DEVELOPING.

IN the first place, your body undergoes great changes. Your limbs extend. And you certainly cut a queer figure! You don't know what to do with your long, awkward hands, unless you put them in your pocket. And how fast you grow out of your clothing! In a short time you grow several inches, and any one of you may grow as tall as a maypole in a couple of years. You are not running

around any more as easily as children, but you cannot yet walk as steadily as your elders. Your lungs expand, your bones harden, your chest swells out. The first serious manly features begin to appear in your former childish, smooth face. And your beautiful soprano voice is lost in no time. And when you think there is nobody around, you will look into the mirror, and eagerly examine your face whether you could make use of a razor yet. Is it not true?

Everything points to the fact that you are in the Springtime of your life. And Spring is certainly a very valuable season, determining the crop of the year. For after a bad Spring, Summer is cropless, and the Fall's outlook causes despair. Not only does your external appearance change, but your internal organs develop too. The development of your heart, lungs and brain, your whole nervous system, gains in momentum. Your whole body grows, it expands, with a hard inward labor that it may become a suitable machinery of your enlarged organism.

This transition from childhood into adolescence is a veritable storm, a revolution. Any time you may suffer from a headache, dizziness, and bleeding of the nose, and the force of your heart beats may cause alarm. Don't be afraid. These symptoms are attendant factors of your growing organism. Proper food, beneficial sleep, and healthy pastimes, will take care of your health. This period of maturing is the most important epoch in your life.

Alas! What a number of young people will, through ignorance, irreparably damage themselves in this important evolutionary period of their life.

WHEN YOU RESEMBLE THE MONTH OF APRIL.

YOUR moods become very changeful; fickleness, easy excitability, selfishness, defiant attitudes, stubbornness, disrespect towards others on the one hand, and self-conceited expectancy for praise and estimation from them, are in the order of the day. Similar changes take place in your temperament. You become like capricious April: in the morning the sun will shine with exuberant joviality, after a half-hour you are drenched to the skin, but when, in a ruffled temper, you get home, the warm sun has already come out of hiding. You become the plaything of such momentary influences. Now you are burning with enthusiasm, lifting you heavenward, then a feeling of dejection, of despondency will knock you in the dust: but why all this you cannot explain to yourself. You become seized with wanderlust. You long for fame, adventures, you wish to perform great deeds—not a few boys do run away from home when in such a frame of mind. During these months and years your soul, in fact, seems to be affected with cold. The slightest draught will harm it, and cause inflammation to set in. It will, however, not be an inflammation of the lungs, but only of the soul. High fever takes hold of you: you grumble, you feel dissatisfied, you are angry; then you begin to sweat, and sweat out a lot of foolish notions: in this feverish state you can hardly talk decently to people—just with a shrug of your shoulder, offensively and rudely. There is especially one wish that takes hold of boys at such times—“Why am I not a grown-up?” What would they not give if they could only be four or five years

older! And though they are not grown-ups, yet they imitate grown-ups as far as possible. But, it is remarkable, they imitate not the virtues and worthy acts of adult people, but they dress, and chat just like adults, and of course, just so will they smoke and drink.

People ignorant of the restlessness of your mind will tactlessly laugh at you and poke fun at you, the unfledged lad. Maybe not even your own mother will understand you. Formerly you were such an obedient boy! She can't understand why you talk back, why you are so irritable. Little children are afraid of you; older people feel vexed with you; all this, of course, will embitter you.

You are a puzzle to your own self.

Oh, how happy is he who at this age is able to find a wise counsellor to whom he can bare all the difficulties of his soul in perfect trust! How luckless he, who with his doubts and tormenting problems, has to turn to corrupt friends and imbibe the bad counsel they will surely give him.

NEW IDEAS, UNEXPLORED DESIRES.

THERE are still other things within you which you sense, and which come to your notice.

Changes of no less importance take place in your soul, which heretofore has been perhaps the cheery, carefree, child's soul. Some strange, indefinable gloominess will overcome you, as if a formless fog were rolling over your soul. Thoughts and longings which you have never before experienced emerge from the gloom of the unknown, and completely confuse you. With worried mind you remember your peaceful, undisturbed state of a few

years ago, and in the confusion of your present thoughts a frightened speculation comes to the fore: "Have I perhaps become morally bad?"

No, you have not, yet. I can assure you you have no reason yet, to be alarmed. There is, however, one thing I wish to enjoin upon your mind; it is that the proper development of your whole future, of your whole moral life, is determined in these years. Now, it will be decided whether your soul, which alone is appointed fit to rule, can gain mastery over your animal instincts, whether you will be a noble-hearted and high-spirited knight, or a pitiable slave of your lower habits.

A new impulse begins to ripen within you, of which you have had no knowledge so far: the so-called sexual impulse.

Indeed, God's great plan is marvellous! When a baby is born it is absolutely helpless, and attains only slowly and gradually those faculties which are needed in different stages of its growth. First it has no teeth—neither does it need them. After the first year, however, it needs food that ought to be chewed—therefore, one or two teeth will appear. Then gradually more and more teeth will grow out, which it needs in that particular period. Although the roots of all its teeth exist already at the time of its birth, they rest patiently under the gums till the time comes for their use.

Just so rests the sexual power in every boy's body till about the age of fourteen or fifteen. Up to that time they don't even know of its existence (unless, through the indecent conversation of wicked companions).

At this age, however, this power begins to awaken, and as it appears now in this, now in that form, it causes restlessness in boys of good conscience. This ripening goes on from the age of fourteen or fifteen to the age of twenty-five, and it is at its height between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. But what is this new sensation which you begin to feel?

More and more you realize the fact, which you have always known before, but didn't think much about, that humanity is divided into two sexes, men and women.

You knew it always, but it did not excite you at all. All you had to do with girls was to pull their hair, and it amused you immediately to hear their shrill screams.

Not for the world would you do such a thing now. If you are in company where you meet and talk to girls, you are overcome by a newly experienced wistfulness, which in turn gives place to a feeling of warmth and gladness. You will make efforts to appear to girls as handsome and clever as possible. You will talk to them of your real or imaginary good qualities, talents, and instead of pulling their hair, you will self-sacrificingly offer them your knightly services, and if there be an opportunity of picking up, with profuse bows, some girl's glove from the floor, your joy is so boundless that one could send you to catch birds.

FIRST LOVE.

WHEN you go home to your books—you are hardly out of Public School yet—you have to muster all your will-power to do your home work. You will exert your mind to square, to

cube, to compute square roots, but suddenly you find that the square root has eyes, ears, a mouth and—in your work book there stands before you a drawing of a pretty girl's face. Then you will tackle a lesson dealing with a piece of English poetry. Perhaps you will study it in order to find applications of the use of the rules of poetics which you have mastered. You will be chewing the end of your pen for a time, then one verse after another will be penned on the paper, and a poem is ready in no time, your first love poem.

This is only the beginning. As time passes you will find that similar thoughts gain stronger possession of your mind, and take an ever stronger grasp of your entire being. No use denying! You will have to admit to yourself that you are in love. And your honest conscience will grow uneasy and take alarm. It will ask: "What is the matter with me?" but won't be able to account for it. Mysterious crops will begin their ripening within you, the seeds of which were till now slumbering in your soul's depths unperceived, and which your innocent eyes will perhaps watch and view with consternation. Is this wheat? Or is it chaff?

CHASTITY TO THE ALTAR, FIDELITY TO THE GRAVE.

ACCORDING to the most holy and immutable will of God, these instincts, now manifest and ever increasing, may only be sated in marriage, the state ordained by God for the perpetuation of humanity. But you are still far, very far, from marriage. Therefore, your most sacred obligation is to conserve these desires and instincts un-

blemished, pure and undefiled, until such time as you will lead your snow-white bride to the Altar of God. Before your marriage you must not, under any pretext, neither alone nor in any other way, yield to such desires. An unmarried person who wilfully entertains incontinent thoughts, or commits incontinent acts, commits a grievous sin.

So be on your guard never to give way wilfully to such thoughts, looks, conversations or actions. If your physical development should bring such images before your mind, then as soon as you are conscious of them, you must dispel them with other thoughts, or resort to some useful activity. If you do this you are on the right path. So I beseech you to impress this most indelibly on your mind.

At your age danger lurks especially in the imagination. At this age every youth is more or less a dreamer. So be on the alert not to imitate the silly example of those who spend weeks and months day-dreaming about the heroes of whom they read, and whom, in their imagination, they try to imitate. Some are slaves of cheap fiction, and, while weaving colorful, fantastic plans for their future life, neglect their duties and their work, and become laggards in everything. Do not let sentimental day-dreaming befog your soul.

Let me repeat what I have said. These desires, reveries, instincts, develop without exception in every growing boy. The sex instinct that you feel is no sin. It is holy, because it is really a mysterious sharing in the creative power of God. These symptoms should not upset you. They only show that the process of ripening into manhood has begun,

and that, according to the plans of God, the power for fatherhood is accumulating within you. The later you reach this process the better. It is reached earliest by those of weak constitution and nervous temperament at twelve or thirteen years. It is reached latest by those whose constitution is sound and healthy, sometimes only around the age of sixteen or seventeen. The longer you remain a child, the more peacefully you develop. Early matured fruits are disappointing.

Let us take an example. You go to the orchard and see a tree laden with apples. The majority are still green, but—behold—here and there are a few red apples. They are so tempting in outward appearance you reach for one. You take a bite—then throw it away in disgust. It is infested with worms and disease. It takes time to produce good, healthy fruit.

So when your physical development reaches this stage, it is your sacred duty not to excite and aggravate these instincts by provocative readings, conversations, looks, thoughts or actions. Take courage in these struggles in the knowledge that God has ordained that you preserve yourself for the noble calling of fatherhood.

IN DANGER, IN STORM.

NOW, my dear young man, you too must in time reach the cross-roads in your development. Sin and Virtue will appear to you as to Hercules, inviting you to follow in their ways. Alluringly, Sin presents herself, lavishly offering sensuous pleasures. At your age your instincts, which I have described, will dictate with ever increasing

severity. As the harsh howls of bloodthirsty hyenas and jackals terrify a caravan in its night camp in the Sahara, so will the dictates of your lower instincts harass you in your lonely struggles, and pleasures, which are offered by the immediate gratification of your senses are portrayed in alluring colors. Incessant temptations will seek to allure you from the path of purity, as if a demon, loosed from its fetters, were revolting within you, asking, promising, scoffing, threatening you to satisfy your baser instincts.

In the raging of this terrible inner storm you scarcely recognize the noble form of Virtue. Amid the tumultuous clamorings of your sensuous desires you scarcely discern her voice: "My young man, do not believe in sin! Do not sin against the purity of your soul, even by a single thought. Keep your body and soul undefiled for your future bride according to the command of God. You may be sure that thus only will you ever be an honest, upright, happy man."

The storm rages with most fury in your nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first year. It is then, my dear young man, you must be staunch; in eddying, foaming seas you must be steadfast; for years you must endure the battle of your passions. Upon this your whole future life depends. The words of the pagan Ovidius sound like ringing hammer blows: "*Nulla reperabilis arte laesa pudicitia est: deperit illa semel.*" (Ov. Her. V. 103, 103). "No art can repair blemished chastity; it can be lost but once." Yes, you can lose your chastity but once. Only he can become an upright man who has reso-

lutely curbed his passions in his youth. Easy as is the initial aberration, difficult is the successful return. Easy as it is to fall from a saddle, difficult it is to remount. Today you are but struggling—there is no evil in this. Beware, lest on account of a faulty step you may have to bemoan the loss of your invaluable soul and innocence.

My dear young man, do you wish to be firm? Do you see, that in your adolescent days sensual desires have no right to satisfaction because they are as yet only intimations from your God of the majestic, creative possibilities for which you are ordained? Do you wish to protect the flower of your youthful soul from the frosts of May? Do you wish to curb your wild animal instincts with a strong hand? Do you wish to keep order in your thoughts? Do you wish to stand firm as a rock, never to be misled by the deceptive will-o'-the-wisp? Do you wish to keep under control the animal instincts of noble manhood, when a blazing hell of passion is raging in your veins?

My dear young man, do you wish to remain pure in your youth?

There are many who do not care, who rashly start on the path of moral decline. Woe to him who starts down that slope! Woe to him whose youthful soul is nipped by the May frosts.

III. CHAPTER

FROST BITTEN IN A NIGHT OF MAY.

THE time will come when you too will arrive at the cross-roads. Beware lest you step on the wrong path, for it is difficult to regain a sure foothold once you have begun to slip down a declivity.

Just read for yourself the sad story of a youth who set his foot on the steep slope of moral carelessness.

In his breast, as in that of everyone, there began to stir the noble instincts and longings spoken of in the preceding chapter. That unaccountable curiosity to discover the secret of life's origin awakened in him, too. The temptation to gratify his desires arose within him. He looked for opportunities to come into contact with people who could tell him of these things.

One day, when he was about fourteen or fifteen, he went to a movie. The feature was some stupid love story, and he saw a drunken revel of men and women mingling promiscuously, men out of all bounds with sensual delight, women almost naked, clinking of glasses, flowing of champagne, a mad hullabaloo of dancing, reeling forms. Something stirred in the boy's heart, feelings and thoughts as yet inexperienced, yet, at the same time, as if something had *tumbled down* in his soul. Who knows what? A beautiful castle, an entire world fell into ruins within him.

"Say, wouldn't it be swell if we tried this ourselves?" a companion, a bigger boy, with eyes aglow,

whispered into his eyes. "Yes!"—shouted a voice within him—"No," immediately replied another. Again a "Yes," again a "No," but he remained unmoved. He only gazed at the exciting scene with eyes glued on the screen, his face reddening, and the blood tingling in his veins. But when at the end of the performance he stepped out in the street, and the cool air touched his face, strange sadness settled on his soul. "I have committed a mortal sin."

He went home and applied himself to his home work, but in vain, for his mind was dull, his soul in agitation. At last he decided to go to confession. And he regained his peace only when his confessor's gentle words quieted his turbulent soul, "From now on, take better care, my son."—"I promise never again . . ."

Alas, few months only had passed when he went to a vaudeville show. The title of the play was so innocent, "The Awakening of Spring." Who could have known beforehand that in it young men and young women would make animals of themselves on the stage, in such manner that if they were acting in the street the police would have arrested them on the spot? Yet, they were charging high admission fees for such a show. As soon as he stepped inside he cast away all restraint. He stared at the stage, his eyes almost popping out of their sockets. His heart beat feverishly. On his way home unclean thoughts whirled in his head unceasingly. Only when he was about to go to bed, and began to say his customary evening prayer, did the qualms of conscience make themselves felt. "I have fallen again into sin." He could not sleep all night. Within, his soul cried bitterly. "Tomorrow I will

go to confession," and with this thought he fell asleep towards daybreak. Waking up next morning, however, he changed his mind. He even comforted himself with, "After all, I am a high school student. I should know about these things, too. I am no longer a child. To be sure, these things interest me from a scientific point of view."

A few weeks later, during a recess at the school, he was drawn aside by one of his "friends" in a higher form, and a booklet was thrust into his pocket, "Here is a choice tidbit; it is full of art photographs." He could scarcely wait for the next recess to hurry and *gloat hungrily* over the works of art.

On quiet evenings his conscience still spoke up, but with ever more faltering voice; its protestations became feebler, until at last they ceased altogether, and a stillness reigned in the youth's soul the dead stillness of the grave.

But this is what he wanted. He resented anything standing in his way when he wanted to have his fling.

The boy had his fling!

DOWNWARD.

AS time went on, little by little, he heard, read, said and did a good many things. He became an "experienced" boy. Not long before he had been contented composing rough poems with untiring perseverance in his spare time. Now, however, he gradually breaks away from these dreamy outpourings and drifts from idealistic regions into sensual domains. Oftener and ever oftener he gives rein to lustful and wild imaginings concerning the

other sex, satisfaction for which he avidly procures from whatever source he can. Not leaving anything to chance, he wilfully seeks out places and opportunities, where he can gather a supply of indecencies for his "enlightenment". He is now in the third grade in high school. His self-importance grows, yet due to his moral inertia he does nothing to check the growth of new weeds which, with the others, help to *strangle* the noble flowers of his character. These new weeds are vanity, self-conceit, dereliction of duty, and—bumming. With a twisted way of reasoning he observes the world, and, with sex interests uppermost in his mind, he notes that well-groomed men are much in favor with women. It occurs to him that he, too, must be well-dressed to make himself more attractive to the world at large, and especially to the weaker sex. So he decks himself out as if every day were a holiday, and he were a millionaire. He also undergoes a corresponding change in general behavior. To make his personality more striking and impressive he uses a good deal of mental effort to copy the manners of adults. Not their good traits—no! Whenever he espies a conspicuous note of affectation and ostentation in the speech, the carriage, and the manners of adults, he sedulously notes them and rehearses and performs them with theatrical strutting.

His attitude towards others becomes overweening and swaggering. "Who knows better than I," is his opinion of himself, which, of course, results in impudence and sometimes outright insolence, to his parents and acquaintances.

He likes best to be in company with friends of his own ilk, and the streets become his second

home. Taking a position at a street corner, they lustily spin the wheel of "uplifting" conversation. Woe to an unaccompanied girl whose way takes her past this group of loafers. While she is yet in the distance they are sizing her up with eager looks. As she passes by she is subjected to loud, *audacious* remarks. There is huge enjoyment and the sparkle of suggestive witticisms until she gets out of their sight, and a new victim approaches. After a while they move along, and as one of them springs the inspiriting slogan, "Come on, let's have a drink," they betake themselves to a secluded spot to sample the contents of their hip flasks; or, and this raises the gaiety of their spirits to the 'nth degree, one of them discloses that he has some money, and generously invites them to a "swell little joint" he knows of, but which is nothing better than a bootlegger's den. There they are soon clouded in the smoke of pipes and cigarettes, and to the accompaniment of clinking glasses they are soon wallowing in an exchange of obscene stories, mutually instructing one another on subjects hitherto unknown, or vaguely understood. Hogs could hardly root up as much filth from stinking pools, as these lads manage in an hour. Having exhausted their stock of double-meaning stories—not that they had nothing to show of obscenities of single meaning, and having exhausted their money, which some of them perhaps obtained by a stealthy grab into mother's purse, they gather themselves together with some difficulty and stagger home.

This is just a portrayal of the fall of one youth who set his foot on the downward path. The most pitiful circumstance in this particular youth's case

is that he is so very sure of himself, yet all the while he is completely ignorant of the opinions people around him really form about him. In his finery he reminds them of a dummy in a display window; his affected mannerisms remind them of an ape trying to imitate men's ways; in his wisecracks they detect geological ages, and nothing but half-baked superficiality in his stilted attempts to deliver himself with wordly-wise impressiveness. His braggings they discount, his impudences they resent; girls of his acquaintance give him deserved rebuffs and continuously put him in his place for his liberties. His teachers wonder at the dullness of the formerly brilliant boy; and people in general shake their heads and shrug their shoulders. And his parents? They find out at the end of the school year that their son has failed miserably in his examinations. This is the natural fate of a boy who, with so many diverting and exciting occupations, has really little time left for his studies, of a boy who wants to be a man before his time, who disarranges and confounds the natural course of bodily and mental development, who, in short, sins against God.

DESECRATION.

GREAT dangers beset the path of a boy who keeps bad company, especially that of older boys, and listens to their conversation on unclean subjects, and their enlightening information how to incite pleasures in his own body. The novel thoughts bred by these conversations keep his mind in constant ferment, and fill his imagination with a shift and change of pictures even the mentioning

of which formerly would have sent through him a quiver of disgust. This heart thumps vehemently, his blood boils. He wonders if it is really such an exquisite delight to play with his own genital organ. Emboldened by the fact that he is alone, and no one can see him, he burns with the desire to try it out; to perform a despicable act on his own body, which, he well knows, is an ugly sin against God, his honor, and human dignity. But who cares for sin at a time when the tyrant instinct lords it over him, that instinct whose urgings, already so clamorous, have been considerably increased by previous talks, reading and songs.

And so the first secret sin has been committed. The unhappy boy has pulled himself down into the sea of corruption—he has become a self-polluter. The whole “delight” may have lasted only half a minute. And afterwards his sleeping conscience awakens with a start and cries out with a great sob. Bitter self-reproach torments the boy as a consequence of his act. His heretofore beautiful, clean soul flashes up for a moment in his mind, and now that the first fall has taken place, his imagination is terrified and haunted by the sudden collapse of a thousand and one sweet dreams.

So Napoleon may have stood in the Russian snow desert, with folded arms, musing, looking on the burning Moscow. So may the prophet Jeremiah have bewailed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. If we mourn over a beloved person’s body from which the soul has departed, how much more ought we to weep over a soul from which God has departed. Oh, if this boy would only weep, shed

tears of blood over the desecration of his temple; for a thousand churches are only a worthless heap of treasure compared to the living temple of God, a chaste youthful soul. St. Paul had this in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians. "Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if man violate the Temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the Temple of God is holy, which you are." (Cor. 3: 16, 17.)

But the interval of reason lasts only for a few days. Before long he is again in the same old company. Again he learns of new events, learns new things, chuckles over new jokes. In a week he repeats the same crime, just as he does the next week, and afterwards ever more frequently. His conscience struggles on for a time as the glowing ember about to die out, as a wild beast caught in a trap, but soon it becomes weary . . . again it is mute and still.

Poor, poor boy. . . . So much youthful energy, worthy resoluteness—trampled in the dust. Oh, if only at fifteen years of age you could foresee the bitter, scalding tears that you will shed when you are twenty, as a result of this sin. Oh, if only you could, at this age, have a forewarning of how this sin will burn out your tender heart until it becomes a hard lump of lava. Oh, if at your age you could only foresee how this sin will wear and tear your snow-white, noble soul until it has become only a soiled and dirty rag. Oh, if you could but foresee the self-reproach and self-pity you will experience, as told by the poet:

Alas, for my poor heart in which a flame
Spread once its light afar where'er I came!
Alas, for my poor eyes, which free from guile
Reflected once the beauty of God's smile!

Alas, for my poor blood, so slow of beat!
Where is the ardor of its youthful heat?
Alas, alas for me, my youth has fled
And all my varied powers are lying dead.

—Kalman Radvanyi.

In playing chess, if you make a wrong move you simply retract the chessman, it hasn't been a valid move; but the moves of immorality you can never retract or invalidate.

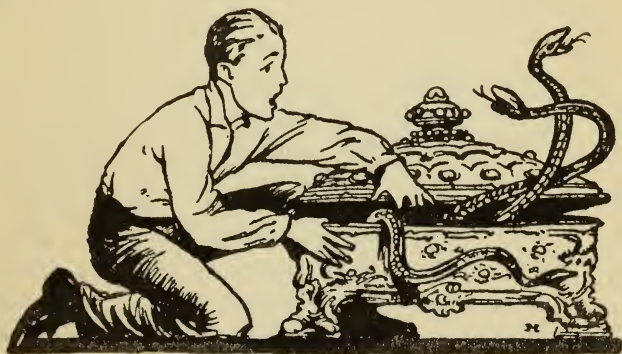
Fading in mem'ry they pass, all our wisdom of
writing and living:
Only that hour still abides, in which self was
forgotten in giving.

—John Vajda.

RAGGED YOUTH.

THUS it is that the character, courage, magnanimity, patriotism, reverence for parents, noble pride, chivalry, heroism and other sterling qualities of the human soul capitulate to deterioration and apathetic unconcern in the soul of such a youth. Is there a sadder sight than that of a young tree in the spring, which should luxuriate in an abundance of blooms, without buds, without leaves, its trunk crooked and crippled, its branches withered and drooping. To such a state does innocence, but scarcely known, change, and freed too soon, it is early lost in the devastating storm of passions. Even the most vigorous tree will shed its leaves, wither and die, if we wound the trunk and let its life sap trickle out of that wound. This secret sin wreaks the same havoc on him who succumbs to its tyranny.

Chastity of soul is like the morning dew sparkling like diamonds on flower petals. The dew emitting this fairy brilliance is but insignificant water drops, but if human touch shakes it off the flower's chalice, it cannot be replaced from all the oceans of the world.



Have you ever heard, my dear young man, of Pandora, the mythical beauty who brought her husband a marvellous golden box as her dowry? When he opened this box, however, destitution, misery, sorrow and disease streamed out of it into the whole world. My dear young man, forbidden sensual pleasures are like such golden boxes, promising fabulous treasure—from outside. But woe to the boy who thoughtlessly dares to open this box of Pandora.

But perhaps you may think that at least, even if at the cost of his soul's peace, this boy is now happy. Far from it. If he were he wouldn't exert himself to obtain new and repeated pleasures. His body which he indulges time after time becomes arrogantly clamorous. It will not be content, although

he gives it pleasure after pleasure, until it consumes his entire soul. Indeed, the end of his voluptuous life is that his soul, too, changes into flesh within him. And he into a selfish, unsympathetic and cold-hearted individual. His soul is dark, apathetic, dreary; and, in his body, demoniacal passions, loosed from their chains, are chasing and haunting themselves. What a base profligacy of man! Even animals do not practise this immorality, but man does—rational man with a free will and created in the likeness of God.

He who carelessly tastes but ever so little of the forbidden honey of immoral acts, becomes like a rat which has eaten poison. Its stomach burns with a terrible fire, it scurries desperately hither and thither in search of water; it drinks, but—oh, the fire is not extinguished until the poisoned animal, with a convulsive shudder, has ceased to breathe. Such a deadly fire has this boy started in himself through his immoral act. “Die wollust scherzt, ihr Ende schmerzt.” (Lust tickles the palate, but at the end it is a worm of the heart.) This sin, according to medical authority (Doctor Friebe) is the surest and, in some respects, the most dreadful short-cut to the grave.

ONWARDS ON THE ROAD TO CORRUPTION.

NOW that the boy has progressed so far, he wants to explore even more thoroughly the secrets of human nature. Now he wants to know everything in any way connected with sexual life, and the origin of human life. Is not a high school student sufficiently mature to explore everything in the world? To delve into such matters

which the Creator's holy will has hidden in the innermost sanctuary of the family? Although he is not married, he wants to know about these things, and experience them. His pals are already well versed in them. Gladly they take this unfortunate boy along with them to dens of vice, to places where he is initiated into all secrets. He wants to meet girls even more unfortunate than himself, and oftentimes there is no need for wicked friends. Is it not true that one cannot go along certain streets in large cities at night without being accosted by these fallen girls, who lure and drag others into the gutter?

A picture of destruction is depressing anywhere. It is a sad sight to see the destruction of a beautiful church caused by the war. But a thousand times sadder is the sight of vandalism perpetrated on the temple of a youthful soul, where but only recently there gleamed the snow white altar of love for God, and there burned the sacred flame of a high idealism.

So, for this boy there are no longer any secrets. He has heard, seen, done and experienced everything. When will he be happy if not now? Why, can it be he is not happy? Why this sadness lying heavily on his heart? What is the reason for the sombre shadow which darkens his features? Why does he cast his eyes down, unable to meet the glance of honest people? Why is his face so pale? Why is he lagging and falling back so far in his studies? Where, in what direction, is his mind a-wandering? Why are his eyes so sunken? Why does he feel like a stranger amongst his upright, honest classmates? Why does he get no enjoyment out of his play and sports? Why? Does he not know everything?

Yes, he knows and—therefore he is unhappy. For he knows that the happiness he has pursued in such a headlong rush, at the cost of his moral integrity, character and honor, he has pursued in vain. He has searched where it does not exist. If we hold a sea-shell to our ear, as a memory there hums in it the booming of the majestic sea, its old home. So, too, in lonely hours there will rise up in the boy's tormented soul the olden aspirations, longings and griefs. With flushed face and thrilling heart he snatched after the many-hued butterfly of fancied happiness, but the butterfly flew away, and in his hand there remained only the powder from the butterfly's wings.

But with the butterfly had flown away the peace, the future and the happiness of a youthful soul. And what remained of the olden blissful paradise? A gaping emptiness . . . a hopeless, joyless, starless, dismal, black emptiness . . . and ghostly flitting ravens cawing in this youthful soul, which should have been echoing with the lilting songs of nightingales.

Charles IV., Hungary's last king, banished to Madeira Island, said this prayer for his seven children on his death-bed: "My Lord, rather take them to yourself than that they should ever offend you with a mortal sin."

Blanche, the French queen, on one occasion spoke these words to her son, later St. Louis: "My son, I love you more than my own heart. You are the only comfort which still remains to me on earth; you are the hope of the kingdom—and yet, I would rather see you dead than ever hear that you had wilfully committed even one mortal sin."

Better on a bier than in mortal sin!

Oh, how bitter would be the tears of worried parents, how the loving mother's heart would stagger under the weight of grief, if she could see her son struggling in the throes of sin, if she could know her unfortunate son's depravity.

You cruel son, your parents so hard working, why do you not spare them this physical pain?

Leonidas, one of the martyrs of early Christianity, kissed the breast of his sleeping son, Origenes, with devotion, for he knew that "The Eternal had come to dwell in that clean little heart." And oh, you unfortunate boy, your soul which was but a short time ago white as ocean-foam, and fragrant with the perfume of spring blossoms . . . your soul, which was the Temple of God, you have bespattered with muck and dirt from a filthy pool.

Yet, this is only the first stage of depravity. We have not yet reached the depths.

THE LAW OF ACCELERATION OF GRAVITY.

THERE is a law in physics according to which a falling body does not always move at the same speed, but that its velocity is accelerated from moment to moment by the mysterious forces of the earth to which it is attracted.

This law of acceleration applies to the spiritual life also. In the depths of every soul there lurks frightful diabolic forces, which—once they have gained the mastery over us—will, with ever increasing force, seize our soul and bear it down into the black depths of sin. Just one careless act, one fall, and the law of acceleration begins to function.

Wherever the sin of immorality passes, with its terrible henchmen, there is left only a barren waste. Youthful heads, formerly held nobly erect, hang down. Strong back-bones grow weak. Rosy faces fade. Characters are shattered. What might have been smiling flowers are only shrivelled stalks rustling in the wind; what ought to thrive in full bloom is parched to brittle dryness.

My dear young man! Hungry bloodhounds, blood-sucking vampires hide in the depths of corrupt human nature. Don't give food to these vampires. It is blood they drink—your fresh, healthy, young blood. Don't unchain these baying bloodhounds or they will sink their teeth into your soul and infect it with rabies. "Every sin"—writes St. Paul—"that a man doth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body." (1 Cor. 6: 18.)

AT THE MAZURIAN LAKES.

DURING the World War the Russian army sustained a crushing defeat at the Mazurian Lakes. Hindenburg, the German commander-in-chief, familiar with every nook and corner of that swampy area, was forcing the Russian columns back towards the lake. As the Russian front began to break and turn in retreat, the Germans relentlessly pursued them. There was no time for deliberations—they had to run. Before them, miles and miles of swamps; behind them, Germans in relentless pursuit.

But it was not long before the pursuit ended.

Suddenly the pursuing army came to an abrupt stop, as if their feet had taken root in the soil, held by the ghastly spectacle taking place before their eyes.

The Russians were fleeing heedlessly over a seemingly solid, grassy ground; but the green grass concealed a bottomless sea of mud, and the pursuing German troops saw with a dread which rooted them to the spot that thousands of doomed Russians were sinking into the bogs. First their feet, then up to their knees, then their bodies, until only their frightfully distorted, appalling faces could be seen. Blood-curdling cries, piercing shrieks for help rent the air . . . but no one could help them . . . then only the hands could be seen, frantically waving . . . and the swamp pulled . . . pulled . . . sucked them below. . . .

So realize, my dear young man, what becomes of the youth who steps on the swampy ground of moral depravity. He is on his way to the depths of corruption.



IV. CHAPTER

IN THE DEPTHS OF CORRUPTION.

THERE is not a boy in whose ears does not sound sooner or later the luring song or clamorous voice of sensual desire. His sound mind, his honest soul, his clean heart, his spirited ideals, all these warn him of his danger, would protect him from the fall; his conscience, like an alarm bell signalling danger, rings in his breast—"No, do not do it!" But at the same time, an enthralling, entrancing, bewitching Siren song falls upon his ear, and sensual desire blinds this poor, struggling soul with the thought of the momentary pleasure to be obtained. But as to what will happen after this moment, as to where he may sink, as to what he may lose, as to what may await him . . . that he is directing his steps toward the possible breakdown of his nervous system, and towards the certain collapse of his character, about all this the Siren's song is silent, all this it carefully conceals from him. As when in a movie the projecting lamp lights up, and our eyes are drawn towards the glaring white screen, we do not see anything else in that moment around us, just so is that boy blinded by the desire for sensual pleasures. He does not think nor consider, he blindly follows.

He is starting off on the decline.

Woe to him who once starts off.

AN OAK TREE SPLIT IN TWAIN.

THERE is no delight or pleasure in the world so brief as that afforded by concupiscence; yet nothing is more costly, in terms of body and soul, than this. It is my desire to depict the result

of this pleasure without any excessive coloring, but in its true matter-of-factness. At times this portrayal may seem unbelievable to you. You may think it is exaggerated. This single sin of concupiscence, after all, cannot be accompanied by so many grave consequences; such immeasurable misery cannot spring from this single sin. My dear young man, what I am describing here is not even a complete picture of the limitless depravity and destruction of soul and body that immorality demands in many cases through a lifetime, and even that of generations, in exchange for a few minutes of sensual pleasure.

I do not assert that this secret sin will lead to the physical collapse of everyone who becomes its slave. There are strong physiques able to withstand the attacks directed against them. However, it is most certain that the younger one is, and the more ruthlessly he is held in bondage by this sin, the sooner he feels the strain and effect on the body.

The destruction of the soul, however, is an absolute certainty. The soul suffers untold damage even in youths of the strongest physique. My dear young man, do not be deceived by the seemingly vigorous appearance of a sinner. It may be his face remains ruddy, his strength seems to be the same, but it is certain that his mental powers have been impaired. His memory is weakened, and his spiritual qualities are undermined. The spirit within him groans under a heap of ruins, and his kingly soul is placed under the shameful yoke of dastardly passions. This sin is a deceiver and attacks from behind. With cunning promise it proffers heaven and earth—until you grasp after it, and commit the sin; and then, when

you have debased yourself and become its slave—when it has robbed you of the most sacred treasures of your soul—it forsakes you and leaves you struggling in despair.

And what, perhaps, is the saddest feature of it all, the sin can scarcely be cured. The soul of one who practises it for a long time becomes so dull and unresponsive to all moral influence, that the pleadings of a loving father, or the authoritative com-



mand of his teachers have no effect. The will-power of such a youth decays completely. At the same time, he does, and he does not, want to act. The first thing in the morning he wastes a quarter of an hour persuading his weakling will to quit the bed. If there is work to do he argues with himself at length whether he should do it or not. Wearily he turns over the pages, now in this book, now in

that, but he studies none. He is no longer able to make a definite decision about anything.

Oftentimes he sighs wearily—"Oh, if things were different." He would like to become a changed being, but to accomplish this he will not lift a finger. He is like a chocolate soldier, with his sword held as if to strike, but he never strikes. Sometimes—after some great spiritual event—he is suddenly shaken: "Yes, now I will pull myself together. From now on everything has to change!"—but nothing changes a whit—the rocket explodes, followed by so much more darkness. This boy cannot be saved because he no longer wants to save himself.

"JUST ONCE"?

IN the previous chapter we have seen the youth in his setting out on the road of sin. It is possible that the poor soul was lead on at first by his curiosity to take this road, by the delusion: "I shall do it just once, so that I may know something about this, too." He did not realize that the first sin is the most dangerous, that the next will stir up fewer qualms of conscience, that a carriage once started downwards on a paved slope can be stopped only with great difficulty.

Do not think that when temptations are vehement and beseege you almost irresistibly, disturbing you even in your work, that you only have to give way in order to be left alone in peace. There are boys who believe that the easiest way to free themselves from temptation is to commit the sin. What a terrible delusion! The first sin against purity fills their minds with so many unclean pictures and these

obtrude themselves on their memory with such tenacity, demanding the actual committal of the sin again and again, that work and study are simply out of the question. The poor boy awakens too late to the terrible realization that before committing the first sin they were muzzled and held in chains. It was the first sin which unmuzzled and emboldened them.

Lion cubs are tame as long as they do not scent blood, but once they get their taste of fresh meat they turn into ferocious beasts.

"Do it just once, and you will know about this, too," whispers the tempter into your ear before the first sin. And the sin has hardly been committed when it continues, "You have done it already; it does not matter how often you do it now."

Therefore, be firm from the very first! For deluded is he who thinks that even if he showed weakness in youth, he can later, in manhood, become a strong character.

Remedies are almost useless if you let yourself remain for a long time in the slavery of bad habits. For you become an addict. Who can tell when Autumn begins? First only one or two leaves fall off a tree, then its branches slowly bare, and lo! on a sudden the chilly winter winds whistle through bare trees. Similarly, in sin we unconsciously proceed from the small to the big. Woe to him who carelessly begins to indulge in the sin of self-pollution, or to exercise the power inherent in the attraction of the sexes, and sets out to experience "just once" those bodily pleasures that marriage only may yield. Oh, how many broken-hearted youths, seeing what they have come to, and ashamed of their practises, have promised tearfully that they will pull

themselves together, and come what may, even if it cost their life, will never again commit that sin. Their promises are sincere, but at the first opportunity, when they find themselves alone, and temptation presses, their will power is so very weak that, offering almost no resistance, they fall again.

THE FIRST FALSE STEP.

HOW could any boy stray so far? Because he didn't offer resistance in the first moment! He didn't know that human life is like a game of chess in which every false move will sooner or later bring its consequences. His immodest conversations, reading and actions, of rare occurrence in the beginning, gain in frequency little by little, until eventually they form a daily habit. It never seriously enters his mind that he might try to break away from them; his soul is dulled, and, in fact—let us admit it—even if he willed he would need to muster immense will power to shake off the tyrannizing domination of his senses. This habit is so ruthless a tyrant over him, that if, eventually, a doctor's warning fills him with fear, inducing him to break away from his secret sin, it is sometimes necessary to bind his hands as this habit will coerce him into sin even in his sleep. The oftener he commits the sin, the more clamorous it becomes; frequent repetition forms a habit, and habit becomes a necessity. At first his sin was just casual, a transient wanderer stopping overnight; later it remained as a guest; and now it is the master of the house. Greek mythology relates of how Antheus, when wrestling with Hercules, gained fresh power whenever his feet touched the earth. So in the same way sinful passion gains more power over us the

oftener our soul touches filth and dirt. Ever so often the poor boy, panic-stricken, endeavors to shake off this terrible burden, but his struggle is in vain; the sin has become a dead weight.

According to a Greek fable, Prometheus stole fire from Olympus, and, as a punishment, the Gods chained him to a rock in the Caucasus. Every day an eagle appeared and tore out his liver. Next day his liver was grown again, but the eagle reappeared. A shocking picture this, of a boy who starts the fire of immorality within himself. His actions chain him to the rock of sinful life, and his sinful lust tears and rends his poor soul day after day. The oftener he sins, the more insatiably passion howls within him: more, give me more! This boy can be compared to a leaky barrel: it will never be filled no matter how much water may be poured into it. This sin practically grows into a necessity of life, just the same as nicotine, alcohol and opium become a necessity to those who use them often, their addicts.

A terrible state: sin a necessity of life.

South African explorers mention a strange kind of snake which can hypnotize birds by merely gazing at them. The snake just looks at its victim, and for a time the poor bird flutters and hops helplessly on the branch, but in vain; it cannot resist; it is compelled to look steadily into the snake's eyes; something draws, attracts, hypnotizes . . . the spell deprives it of its will; it must come nearer the snake, nearer and nearer . . . till there is a sudden pounce, and the bird is strangled.

This is an exact picture of a soul struggling in the embrace of immorality.

Yet, it is possible he began this sin just out of carelessness or ignorance. At first with many a boy, this was not even a sin. Climbing on a pole, riding horse-back, sliding down a balustrade, he may first have had a sensation of pleasure in that organ, and thought it was just some kind of interesting game, and when, later, he realized that it was a sin against nature, it was too late; he could not give up these regrettable actions that he had been practising for years. Another was taught by a bad playfellow, perhaps at a very tender age, how to produce this "pleasure" in himself. It is true he felt right at the beginning that what his playmate was teaching him might not be right, that it was really a sin, for he wouldn't have done it in sight of his father or mother. Nature herself whispered to him that it was a sin, and that it ought to be concealed. For he would rather have had his hand cut off than reveal to his mother or others what he was doing on himself.

You have, no doubt, learned about insect-eating plants. As soon as an unsuspecting insect alights upon their hairy leaves it becomes stuck and the leaf rolls around it greedily. When, in a few days, it again unfolds, there remains only the miserable crust: the plant has sucked out and consumed all its substance and its life.

In the same manner does the sin of immorality suck out the vitality of the unsuspecting boy who is seized by its clutches.

Because of this, many conspicuous changes take place in his character and general behavior, and eventually in his physical health, too, which, try as he will, he cannot hide from the world.

DESCENSUS AVERNI.

THROUGH his immoral actions he has thrown away irreplacable physical and spiritual energies. Energies which, in his youth, he should have used in the sound formation of his future. His teachers and class-mates at school, his parents at home, observe a great change in him—how the lively, sturdy, quickly perceptive boy has fallen back so much intellectually, and sometimes physically. They see and wonder.

They wonder how this proficient, outstanding student can suddenly become so very negligent. Formerly with the leaders of the class, he is lucky if he doesn't fail in a number of subjects. He quietly sits out school hours, but one only has to watch him a little to see that his thoughts are far away. He stares vacantly into space, seeing nothing; at times, in fits of abstraction, he does not think of anything. Usually he weaves patterns of coming amusements. If spoken to he starts and blushes. It is apparent his consciousness had been brought back from far places. The least mental exertion makes him sweat.

Later on, a gradual estrangement from his old pals takes place. Their most innocent jokes anger him, and he retorts rudely. He has only one or two confidants, those of his own ilk. With these at every recess and on the way home from school he industriously and secretly plots and makes his plans. When an "uninitiated" happens to attach himself to them, they make long faces like the shadow of a tree at sunset, and they become so uncivil that he immediately leaves them.

Along with frankness, other virtues of youth also perish. Readiness to serve, open-heartedness, gratitude, affection, enthusiasm for the noble and beautiful, all disappear. *Because the most accurate touchstone of moral firmness is purity of life.* What good is an apple if it be worm-eaten? Of what value is a gilt coffin, if it hide a rotting body? A boy's entire state of mind changes into coarseness, his frank boyishness disappears, as the scent from rose petals roughly crushed.

He vegetates without purpose and will.

In the neighbourhood of Rome there are immense swamps, centuries old. Their stench taints the air of the entire countryside, and affects the souls as well as the bodies of the people inhabiting the surrounding areas. These waxy-complexioned, gloom-burdened people live on the swamps, and are seen resignedly pushing their flat-bottomed punts over the fetid water. In other parts of Italy, when the people are asked "Come Sta?" (How are you?) the reply is "Si vive" (We are getting along). But in this melancholy region they answer, "Si muore" (Just slowly dying).

"Si muore, si muore!"—a great many young people might say of themselves.

This, however, is only natural. Oaks do not grow to great heights in dark tunnels, nor do roses thrive in musty cellars. There, only mold and mildew cover the walls, and pallid cellar spiders crawl amidst repellent centipedes. "He whose soul is a prisoner" writes a famous sociologist, "senses that not a single flower of morals thrives in him, and at every step his tasteless enjoyments stamp him an animal."

Then this is why the formerly smiling face is now so clouded! This is the reason for the furrows on the youthful brow. Oh, how sad it is to see the fading of the rainbow!

Furthermore, respect for the rights of ownership also disappear. So many smutty magazines, movies and get-togethers with his companions cost money, and at home his mother sighs frequently over the thieving habits of present-day domestics, as money disappears almost every week from the drawers.

The memory, too, of such youth is weakened. Serious subjects hold no interest for them; they are incapable of receiving new mental impressions. They become downcast and depressed, and later, frightfully coarse. They stand very near despair. Work offers them no manly enjoyment. Their energy breaks down, they cannot concentrate for any length of time upon any purpose, and so they make no progress in any field of endeavor. Their thoughts revolve almost exclusively around unclean concepts, which completely monopolize their imagination. Other subjects arouse no interest. Their activity becomes paralyzed. Their will is just a helpless puppet, unequal to any task. They degenerate into laggard, cowardly, lying, hypocritical, low-minded youths. Wherever they go they exhale this fetid atmosphere. On walls, in their books, in washrooms, in bathing places, everywhere, they express their filthy imagination or filthy rhymes. They are insufferably nervous, and fantastic ideas play about in their minds. So, by the sin of self-pollution in their youth they waste what cannot be made up in the whole of a lifetime.

Oh! How deeply true of them these lines by
Petofi:

Night in my mind, a night of nights;
Ghosts in that gloom, a throng of sprites,
Spawn dark, uneasy forms of ill
That, beastlike, tear each other still.
The blood within my heart boils o'er
Like horror in a witch's pot.
My fancy is a meteor
That trails me with it, fierce and hot.
Dejection shares my room with me;
My neighbour is Insanity.

—From "Clouds", by Alexander Petofi.

How could it be otherwise! Bid the blazing fire
not to burn—but burn it will. Tell the raging sea
to be calm—but rage it will. A thief steals from
others, but the unchaste robs himself, he bespoils
himself of his most valuable treasures—his physical
and moral strength. "Descensus Averni. . ." On
the way to the underworld.

ENLIGHTENED STUDENTS.

AS time goes on, and more and more of his good
qualities are lost, his character becomes more
and more impaired, he ultimately arrives at
total moral collapse—unbelief.

If it were not so exceedingly serious and fateful,
one would be inclined to smile at hearing boys in
their 'teens talk belittlingly, derisively, spurningly
and heathenishly of religion and of God—of facts
*before which the most outstanding and intelligent
representatives of humanity have always bowed
their heads with greatest reverence.*

It does not strike high school students as strange
when they hear one of their companions openly

making statements that his teacher may "chew the rag" as much as he pleases, but that he is already "enlightened", he has "learnt plenty", he "knows" there is no heaven, no hell, no God; no imperishable soul.

Now, what can this "plenty" be which this convert to atheism has learnt, and which the learned representatives of natural history and the other branches of science failed to discover? Surely the intellectual leaders of humanity must have learnt and known something.

I recollect an old epitaph which Benjamin Franklin, the inventor of the lightning rod, prepared for his own gravestone:

The Body
of
Benjamin Franklin
Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding,
Lies here, food for worms,
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,
In a new
And more beautiful edition
Corrected and amended
by
The Author

Surely one who so faithfully looked forward to a new, blissful life after death could not be an unbeliever.

Then what about Keppler, Newton, Boyle, Linne, Lavoisier, Liebig, Appere, Galvani, Voltaire, Pasteur, etc. So many names familiar to a high school student. Is it not remarkable that these and so many other scientific luminaries of the world, besides their world-wide reputation for learning, also had the reputation of being believers in God, and, many of them, of being devout Christians. What a contrast to the youth who is being led into unbelief by science! The great Pasteur once said, "Because I have learned much my Faith is as strong as that of a Breton peasant; if I had learned more, my Faith would be that of a Breton peasant's wife."

Listen to the words of the poet depicting that "learned" fellow student of yours:

"See how the green head of wheat lifts itself towards
heaven's round,
Empty and proud; but when ripe bows its head
toward the ground.
Boastful the school-boy is yet, with his mind's
unripe pelf;
While the full-visioned philosopher humbles him-
self."

—Daniel Berzsenyi.

Did that strike home? It was not science that turned your classmate into an atheist. What science could there be in that 'teen-year-old head of his?

But, you will say, you are informed that there are renowned scholars who profess to be atheists. I do not deny it. The fact is, there are. I am, however, curious about one or two things. I am curious about the great day of Judgment when all our hidden thoughts will be unveiled, and we shall then recognize these men trembling as slaves of sin. Famous men who had always declared that the

only reason for their becoming sinners was that they were unable to bring the teachings of religion into agreement with their scientific conclusions. No, my young man, knowledge in itself is not dangerous. Only its expounders can be such. Real knowledge always leads to God, but it is also true that a corrupt heart leads one away from God.

“First comes indifference, then doubt,
Then contradiction, hate and scorn;
The devil claims the half-thought-out,
Full comprehension’s heaven-born.”

—F. W. Weber.

Deep truth lies in the words of Holy Scripture, “Incorruption bringeth nearer to God.” (Is. 6: 20.) Yet, “The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God.” (I Cor. 2:14.)

WHY “THERE IS NO GOD”?

SO, your fellow-student, too, was led into unbelief by his corrupt heart, by the frequent contradictions he found existing between faith and his own mode of life. The constant reproaches of his conscience, the ever-present anxiety over, “What if God really exists?” “What if I will be called to account for all my actions and also my thoughts? Woe to me if it be true. . . . Why, everything would be different if there were no God. . . . Maybe there isn’t any. . . . There is. . . . Is there? . . . Yes. . . . No. . . . There is no God!” concludes this young man after a period of tormenting speculation.

I can assure you that no one in the world would be irreligious if earnest and exacting moral laws were derived, not from religion, but from algebra and physics. But, on the other hand, there would

be many more people to raise doubts about the propositions and theses of algebra and physics in the name of "enlightenment".

That the cause of unbelief is, in most cases, moral degeneration, is proved convincingly, too, by the fact that unbelief is ordinarily a concomitant of the maturing years of youth accompanying the storm and stress of these years, and that, as these passions lessen, so, too, does the scepticism. A child is not without faith, but on the contrary, it is happy with its thoughts of God. Neither are old people irreligious; in fact, their only hope lies in religion and faith. Between these two, however, there lies the age of storm and stress, which Pascal characterizes in these words, "Le coeur a des raisons, que la raison ne connait pas." (The heart has arguments much different from those of reason.) Yes, a corrupt heart can make one an unbeliever, but a studious mind inclines to faith. No one embraces free-thinking except one who is thinking of his own interests in denying God's existence.

Only the youth who endeavors to preserve his moral purity during these years of physical development remains immune from religious doubts. Or even if someone actually has rational doubts or difficulties concerning faith, I should never feel anxiety for him so long as he preserves his soul's purity. On the other hand, however, to a man living immorally, first prayer becomes tasteless, next religious practices, afterwards his whole religion begins to irk him, and finally he loses his faith. *He is bound to lose his faith.* For he endeavors to justify the devastations of moral rotting taking place within him, and his sinful mode of life, by various philo-

sophical arguments. In books he looks for theories that will justify that atheism which he has already previously established by the practice of sinful life against God, who Himself is Holy, and Who exacts a like holiness from His creatures.

Purity is not only a result, but a "*conditio sine qua non*" of faith. To prevent the reason from turning to paganism, it is necessary to prevent the heart from doing so. "Keep your heart in such a condition that it desires God's being and presence, and never will you doubt in Him." (Rousseau.)

Have you ever heard what the ostrich does when it is hunted? In its fright it buries its head in the sand, and since it does not see its enemies it is quite sure that there are none around. I wonder if these "unbelieving" young men are not hiding their faces from God in their fright. They do not see God; they do not wish to see Him. That, however, does not mean that there is really no God. Undoubtedly a great many young people coerce their minds into atheism for fear of having to change their mode of living. Why is a sinner averse to thinking about God? Because he feels that he owes a great debt to God, and, of course, anyone will give a wide berth to the house of his creditor. La Bruyere, a great authority on man's mind, writes in his "*Caracteres* 16," "I would like to find a sober, temperate, pure man, who denies God's existence and the immortality of the soul. The opinion of such a man would be unbiased, at least. But such a man does not exist."

With how many youths is there repeated the incident described by the world-famous writer, Francois Coopee, after his conversion. In the introduction to his book, "*La Bonne Souffrance*," he says,

"I was brought up as a Christian, and performed my religious duties for years after my first communion, with the zeal of a child. I openly confess that I was turned from devoutness by the sins of my youth and the fear of a frank confession. Many in a similar situation will, if they be frank, admit with me that they first became estranged from religion by the strict command of God regarding the purity to be observed by everyone, and that only in later years did they feel the necessity of justifying their infraction of moral laws by scientific systematizings."

"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God," says our Lord. And the impure of heart? They see everywhere nothing but sexual impulses, dirt, filth, depravity, and grievous strife.

"Gentlemen," Chateaubriand, the world-famous writer, said to a select society, "lay your hand on your heart and admit honestly—Would you not have the courage to believe if you had the courage to live a pure life?"

And who are so bold in denying all things?
Those who have wasted the wealth of their youth,
Beggars in soul and the heart's inmost springs,
Crooked in thought and devoid of all truth.
Everything mirrors their purulent mind;
Justice to them is a matter of mood;
Full of suspicion they spit on mankind,
Seeing existence distorted and crude.
Deep in debauch is the life that they lead;
Beastly they wallow in mud and in shame;
Virtue and sin have no meaning, they plead;
Beauty and ugliness both are the same.
He who is blind from his birth cannot tell
Sunlight from darkness, of day unaware;
He whose heart's vision is ghastly and fell
Will not believe there is anything fair.

—From "Young Pessimists", by Julius Revicsky.

So, whenever I hear of atheistic youths, of their "mature" thinking, of their "enlightened" opinions, I can't help but recall to memory a saying of St. Augustine, "Nemo incredulus, nisi impurus" (No one is an unbeliever unless he is impure). To an unbeliever I unreservedly give the advice first uttered by Pascal, "If you wish to be convinced of eternal truths, do not augment your arguments, but weed out your passions." Part with your sins, and tomorrow you will have a strong faith.

IS IT JOY? IS IT HAPPINESS?

BUT, at any rate, you say you are happy, my poor young friend! You had to buy happiness at a great cost to yourself, but you have gained it! Tell me, is it so? Tell me, are you really happy?

You will say, "Yes, and I have seen something of life!"

Not so fast, young man, go slowly! I don't believe it. No! You are just deceiving yourself. You must admit to yourself that you are not sincere. Because if you were happy why should those hours come when inexpressible fatigue stifles your soul? Hours, when nothing can cheer you up. Nothing in the world. Why do you sit with your books, staring into space? Are there not doubts preying on your mind? You pass your weak, trembling hands over your forehead. You wanted to live a "pleasurable life". Why do you become so sad now? What causes that yawning depth in your soul, and that paralyzing gloom, and that awful

distress? What are those heart-rending sobs, that weeping from afar of a timid bird frightened away, which you hear in your quiet moments, is "Purity", which had for years with such sweet twitterings spread cheer and joy over your life until you chased it out of the warm nest of your soul. Why does sadness visit you in your better moments, lamenting, "In your past you find no joy, in your future you see no hope." Why has this happened? Because immorality gives a momentary delight with one hand, but, in exchange, takes from us treasures, a thousandfold, with the other.

What has become of your energy? Your resoluteness? Something whispered in your ear, "Be free!" Yes, you became free; free from the laws of the Creator, but a groaning slave of your impetuous instincts! See how happy and laughing your classmates are. Oh, if only you would be honest with yourself and would acknowledge *that when you were searching for pleasures on forbidden paths, in your blindness, instead of pleasure, you drank the bitter gall of misery.*

Life's joy is untrue, though the smile of bright
heaven look on,

We start to possess it; and lo, it is perished and gone.

—Charles Kisfaludy.

A TREE IN WHICH WORMS ARE GNAWING.

BUT this destruction of the soul which affects all sinners *without exception* is but one punishment of the sin of immorality. This terrible punishment, no sinner can escape. It may happen, however, that the sinner will also be visited



by another punishment, the punishment of his body. Some youths of robust constitution are able to withstand the ravages of this sin, but many who persist in practising it suffer in body because of it. "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. VI, 23.) Spiritual death always, and eventually physical death as well.

Have you ever heard the legend of Atlantis the beautiful sunken continent? It is said that in calm weather one can look down to the bottom of the sea where this immense area of land lies buried. Spires, cupolas, fantastic architectural forms fill the sailor chancing to come upon that spot, with awe, and a cold shudder

creeps over him when he feels the mysterious beauty of this sunken world beckoning to him from the depths of this grave of the sea. How often in youthful lives does this sad legend of the sunken continent become a frightful reality? How many young men, physically broken and spiritually hopeless, cry out in vain for the return of the beauties of their souls, sunk in the depths of sin,—for a beautiful sunken world, which cannot be resurrected.

I want to emphasize the fact, young man, that the sin of immorality is in reality a presumptuous attempt to disrupt the Creator's plans. He that does homage to this sin, sets himself at odds with natural laws, and this *cannot be done with impunity*. We cannot transgress Nature's laws without coming to grief.

So the physical consequences which follow a dissolute life should be a deterrent to sinners. Though any sin may demoralize our human dignity, this sin ruins our physical health as well. This sin is one which has an earthly punishment, and a terrible one at that. The civil law does not exact a penalty for this sin, but Nature is a sterner judge than earthly magistrates. For this sin the peoples at the time of the Flood were destroyed by that immense cataclysm. For this sin the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were burned by fire, and for this sin great numbers of people of our day are consumed by a punishment more severe than water or fire—by becoming invalids in youth.

A heart-rending instance of this is found in the life of Andrew Ady, the unfortunate Hungarian poet, whose unbridled dissipations began to sap his

health at an early age, so that, though still a young man, his lips whispered the dreadful plaint:

. . . . my strength is gone, and I am left
with deep disgust, deep dread,
and a diseased and wither'd trunk."

—from "The Old Malignant One" by Andrew Ady.

Once full of ardor, my two foolish arms
Move yet again, outstretched in yearning,
And then fall helpless like two strangled snakes
Entwined across my breast.

—from "Snake Instead of Froth" by Andrew Ady.

Beauty, and Purity, and Right. . .
Ye words I smiled to view:
Ah, if my sinful heart had died
When I smiled down on you!
Kindness, and Chastity, and Good. . .
For you is now my need!
I trust in Christ, I wait for Christ. . .
Sick am I, sick indeed.

—from "I Believe Faithlessly in God" by Andrew Ady.

Young man, if you feel sometimes that temptations are too strong, if it almost seems that all moral considerations are of no avail in the face of the impetuous attacks of impulsive nature, please remember what I want to brand on your memory with words of fire, "*Nature wreaks dreadful vengeance upon him who endangers the purity of mankind with his immorality.*" An immoral life weakens your bodily health, undermines it, and may eventually lead to a miserable end and pull you into the grave, inflicting a shameful death, while still in your youth.

How true are the words of the physician who wrote these lines: "Self-pollution is not only forbidden by the commandments of religion, but also by medical science, for in it science recognizes the

cause of grave diseases, and, at times, even the danger of death." (Dr. Surbled, *Vie de Jeune Garcon*, Paris, page 44.)

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

ANYONE who traffics in sinful pleasures must pay an awful price. You feel so strong in your youthful vigor. Blindly you sip from the delightful cup of sensuality, and it never occurs to your mind that ere long—perhaps in a few months—you will get to the bottom—to the bitter, disgusting dregs. You say you cannot be harmed by anything; you live in the illusion that you can have your enjoyment free of charge. That there is no piper to be paid. Alas! How terrified you will be when Nature sends in her bill. Is it not a medically proven fact that the young man who marries too soon (say at twenty) and so at an early age gratifies his impulses in marriage, even tho' in the permitted state, often dies an early death, and his children as well? Why? Because the organism, in order to live and to obtain its full development, requires those saps which are used up in early marriage.

The more delicate, artistic and complex an organism is, the longer it takes nature to build it up. The human body, that marvellously fine organism, takes more than twenty years for proper and complete building up. Nature, working quietly day and night on this wonder-mechanism, needs more than twenty years to complete its work. So it is of first importance that the organs which shall be called upon to serve in the procreation of human life should be left in peace, and undisturbed.

If a boy were to cut off a piece of his lung once every week, what would happen to him in a few months' time? So, in the same way, a boy who excites and racks his system by impure actions, disrupts his whole organism, which should be developing in the greatest possible peace and quiet. Such a boy wastes in his fourteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth years the youthful energies which nature intended to be stored up for his twenty-fourth or twenty-sixth year, the time of marriage. The saps which he dissipates should be used in supplying marrow to the bone and food to the nerves. Think of the fierce excitement into which a boy lashes his body, the violent reaction of his whole nervous system while in the act of committing this sin, and the damaging after-effects all this may have upon his entire being. Then you will understand why one so often sees sallow-faced, hollow-cheeked, empty-looking, apathetic young men, with nervous, clammy hands, whose faces have lost their freshness and clearness, the lovely outward manifestation of their moral innocence; young men who have scarcely attained their majority, yet from whose faces the bloom of youth has already fled; young men with flabby muscles and sunken eyes, whose voices have lost their ringing tone, whose skin is a sickly, pallid hue, who are always tired however long they sleep, who suffer from constant headaches and insomnia, and who are threatened by the entire collapse of their nervous system, even by madness, although they suffer from no other organic ailment.

All this plainly shows the terrible punishment of their secret sins. Almost literally the words of Holy Scripture are fulfilled: "In what day soever thou

shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." (Gen. 11:17.)

Nothing works more unsparingly towards the wasting away of the human organism than this sin. Like a leech never satisfied, it sucks away the sinner's cheerfulness, it kills the roses on his cheeks, and extinguishes the sparkle in his eye.

For the substance squandered by this sin *causes a weakening of the whole system almost equal to a loss of blood twenty times as great.* This substance is of vital necessity—according to undisputed medical evidence—for the internal and external building-up of the body, to give resiliency to the muscles, strength to the bones, lustre to the eye, keenness to the intellect and the other faculties. When this substance is wasted, a boy becomes a laggard in everything, just as the power of a locomotive will decrease



if the fireman scatters the coal along the tracks instead of shovelling it into the engine.

According to the latest findings of the medical world, the state of the soul can also influence the state of the body. Psychotherapy, one of the new methods of curing, attempts the healing of the body

through the soul. It is now recognized that the continually depressed spirits of such an unfortunate boy make themselves felt on his body also. The continual strain upon the nerves and squandering of the vital powers, cannot but bring on grave consequences. For a time the system endeavors to replace the lost matter, but after a while this replacement takes place at the expense of the entire organism. As a matter of fact there is not a single activity of the whole human system which influences the nervous system to such a degree as the functioning of the genital organs.

The body is a "self-contained" power system, which means that, if there be an undue amount of energy used up by some of its activities, one cannot borrow that "plus" from somewhere outside, but must take it away from some other department of the organism. A "plus" in one part, at the same time means a "minus" in some other place. Now the great squandering of saps, accompanying the sinful excitation of the genital organ, causes frightful "minuses" in other areas of the body, so that physical health, a fresh memory, keen perception, joy of life, are lessened to a great extent.

Continual sexual excitement rocks a youth's system to its very foundation; it undermines its resistance and disorganizes the work of the digestive and breathing organs, and interferes with blood circulation. Such a youth becomes pale and anaemic, and very susceptible to consumption, which in these days takes a heavy death toll, in ever more appalling numbers. Thus it is that boys shorten their lives by years and even what remains of their life is only misery, for outraged Nature rises in rebellion against

this wanton desecration. Alas, it is the colors slowly fading in the rainbow!

Now, as I have said, there are youths of vigorous physical make-up, whose health will not be impaired so much by this sin, but even these, to a certain extent, pay the cost of their indiscretion. Their power of resistance diminishes, they become more susceptible to sickness, any tendency to hereditary disease is increased in them, the joy of living is lessened and they stand their ground in life's struggle with great difficulty. *Even when endowed with the strongest physique a sinning boy cannot escape these punishments.* A great many pay even a heavier penalty, suffering a complete disruption of body and soul, dishonesty, feebleness, weariness of life, sometimes tuberculosis, tabes, dorsalis, yea, even the mad-house. These are the appalling punishments meted out to the boy who indulges in immoral living.

Look into the eyes of such an unfortunate boy. Good God! Those sunken eyes are those of a child. Those distorted features still have the outlines of a child's face. He has not lived long enough to see its soft features hardened into manliness. "But a little child, and already so great a sinner," exclaims St. Augustine. (*Tantillus Puer et tantus peccator.*) Does the promise of Spring turn into Autumn-wilting so soon?

My dear young man, when you first sold your soul to Satan, did you give a thought as to how inexorably Satan would exact his dues? Did you realize that your toll to him would be blood, marrow, healthy eyes, nerves, and even your very soul?

What is this? Something has fallen here on my writing paper? A flower pot stands on my desk and

as I write these lines, a wilted petal falls before me. For a moment I stop writing and contemplate the flower. Why has this little petal fallen off? Of course, I see; it was wilting and fading, it no longer adorned the flower; so the flower shed it. Poor little petal! And you, poor human bud, you are wilting and dying, even before you come to the fullness of bloom. You no longer adorn life, so life is discarding you. . . .

Listen to me, now, young man, and with a composed mind strike a balance for yourself. Put on the credit side, the fleeting sensual pleasures which your self-abuse may yield, and on the debit side, everything that you will have to pay for those momentary delights—peace of soul, wasted years, ruined hopes, broken character, and perhaps, the loss of health.

Yes, strike a balance between what you “enjoy” in sin, and what you “pay” in exchange for sin.

Yet we have not considered the maximum of punishment. We have not reached the very abyss of depravity. What we have considered are only the consequences of the unclean sin of self-abuse.

ROTTING ALIVE

THERE are other diseases, resulting from immoral contact with the opposite sex. My dear young man, I shudder as I pen these lines, for here I must speak of the tragic fate of so many youths—a fate of which perhaps you have never heard, but which I must mention in order that you may see how one, single, careless act of yours may sweep you to destruction, and so that you may not have to curse the moment—as so many thou-

sands have—when you first sought to obtain immoral pleasure in dens of vice among unfortunate women, or with one picked up by chance in the street.

Be it known to you then, my young man, that through sexual contact with fallen girls and loose women, you can contract diseases—*only one occasion is sufficient*—from whose ravages your body will suffer for years, of which oftentimes you cannot be cured, which will pollute your blood, and which—if you marry—may be inherited as a dreadful patrimony by your wife—your children—your grandchildren—all your generations. They may inherit all this from you, and if they do, they will curse the memory of their fathers who left them such a legacy.

Perhaps you do not realize how wide-spread these diseases are among men. According to medical findings, in almost every case, a man who sins with a debauched woman, contracts from her one kind or another of venereal disease.

Do you know that honest society is looking in alarm for ways and means of protecting itself from this contagious scourge, and even the drastic suggestion has been made that everybody should be subjected to an examination, and that anyone found with such a disease should be stigmatized with a branding-iron, as a warning to decent people to avoid such unfortunate individuals.

There are three classes of venereal diseases, and one of these diseases alone — syphilis — takes a greater toll of humanity than plague, cholera, and yellow fever combined. Yet how we dread the plague and cholera.

According to statistics of insurance companies, anyone who contracts this disease, even if he is cured, shortens his life by ten years.

When it reaches its third stage this disease causes running sores and a constant fever; stabbing pains in the bones and muscles; maddening headaches; inflammation of the eyelids, the bowels and the mucous membranes; the victim grows weary and exhausted, but insomnia will not let him rest. Thus a great variety of diseases affect him. He has no power of resistance against them, and as the infection progresses into the hopeless stage, the victim's palate becomes perforated with sores; his bones become brittle, often the bridge of his nose rots away; and his face becomes a horrible, distorted mass.

Even greater danger threatens through infections of the arteries, resulting in malignant heart cramps; and if the great artery, communicating with the left auricle, be diseased and unable to stand the pressure of circulating blood, it may dilate and finally become ruptured. The poor patient, vainly seeking a cure, grasps at everything, attends to every suggestion. At times it seems as if he has found a complete cure. Even the doctor thinks so. Then suddenly, long years after, when this experience has been entirely forgotten, the old malady breaks out afresh with terrific force, because the latent bacilli in his body have sprung into new life.

He may be stricken by tabes, imbecility, paralysis, blindness. There is scarcely any hope for a certain and complete cure for such patients, and so, he, who in his youth was perhaps the object of fondest hopes, perishes miserably as an outcast and a blight on humanity, and an oppressive burden to his family.

As to the excruciating pains which accompany tabes; the maddening knowledge that a patient has of the daily progress of his paralysis, and the derangement of his brain, which he is powerless to check, with the picture of the asylum in the distance—of all this I shall speak no further. Oh, if all youths could only visualize this grim tragedy overtaking them as a result of their first attempt to “get pleasure”. For a few minutes’ “pleasure”, perhaps a wasting spine and the lunatic asylum. . . . Truly, an awful business.

Now, do not think that I am exaggerating and just trying to frighten you. Do not say that if these diseases were really so dangerous one would hear oftener of this or that man dying of them. Is it not only natural that one suffering from such a malady will try to hide it from everybody? Moreover, these diseases often take their victims under an *entirely different name!* Doctors often are the only witnesses of these grim tragedies enacted in society. They alone know how many cases of lung, liver, brain and bone diseases, and cases of early hardening of the arteries point to syphilis as their real progenitor.

Study carefully the statistical statement compiled from the data of the Gotha Life Insurance Company of Berlin, by the German Society for Controlling Venereal Diseases. It clearly shows that those once affected by syphilis (even if cured of the disease), die in greater number from various other diseases than those who have never suffered from venereal diseases. If we take average mortality as 100 (indicated by the vertical broken line) it will be apparent that, counting out pneumonia and diseases of the breathing organs, the cured syphilitics perish in

appalling numbers from various diseases, especially paralysis, tabes and aneurism.

	Average mortality of the insured	100
	From consumption	48
	From diseases of the breathing organs	99
	From contagious diseases	110
	From diseases of the kidney	164
	From diseases of the stomach and intestines	184
	From diseases of the blood-vessels and blood-circulation	216
	Suicides	222
	Apoplexy	228
	From diseases of the brain, outside of paralysis	245
	From paralysis	503
	From diseases of the spine	667
	From aneurism (artery tumor)	680

Old Greek legends tell us the story of the monster Minotaur, with the head of a steer and the body of a human whom King Minos shut up in the labyrinths of the Island of Crete. Each week, seven Athenian youths and seven maidens were thrown to this beast as food and sacrifice. Now, this is just a legend. But all the destruction of this fabled monster is nothing compared to the cursed ravages of the sin of immorality, which irresistibly sucks countless numbers of youths from our midst down into the whirlpool of spiritual and physical annihilation.

A French physician of the last century, one of the greatest experts on venereal diseases, said: "If one does not fear God, he ought to fear syphilis. The horror of this disease is known to its miserable victims, and better still, to physicians, who have seen it at work in hundreds of different forms, and hundreds of different patients. Sometimes hereditary syphilis is latent for from thirty to forty years, without the slightest sign of its presence. Then, without warning, it makes its appearance as tabes, or syphilitic imbecility, commonly called paralysis." This is given stress by the following verse from the German:

Lust und Freude sterben jung und bald
Der Kummer wird hundred Tahre alt

Soon our joy and happiness are o'er;
Sorrow lives a century or more.

You have probably heard the name of Leonardo Da Vinci, one of the greatest painters of the world, and perhaps have seen a reproduction of one of his best works, "The Last Supper," which is painted on the wall of the refectory of a monastery in Milan.

But you have scarcely heard of the moving incident which is associated with this picture. The artist had considerable difficulty in finding a suitable model for painting the sublime face of our Lord. Then one day, in a church, he chanced to come upon a strikingly beautiful young chorister, Pietro Bandinelli, who gladly served as a model for the face of Jesus. Months came and went, until two years had passed. Again Leonardo walked the streets, out of humor, because he could not find a suitable model for Judas. He was searching for someone whose face would reflect all the evil which is expected to be portrayed in the face of Judas. At last he came across a young, but prematurely-aged man, in whose evil countenance he found the wickedness he sought. But as he led this man to his "Last Supper," and was about to begin painting Judas' face, great sobs suddenly shook the stranger's frame, for he was no other than Pietro Bandinelli, who had given himself up to immorality, and in two years' time that terrible sin had distorted the Christ face into that of a Judas. That is what happened to his body! What must have happened to his soul?

Oh, if only the silent graves of cemeteries could speak: those silent graves into which the sin of immorality has prematurely thrust so many promising youthful lives.

My dear young man, let us close the book for a time, and reflect with prayerful spirit upon the eternal words of the Holy Scripture, "If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the Temple of God is holy, which you are." (I Cor. 3: 17.)

TERRIBLE RESPONSIBILITY.

WOULD that only you perished! But just as only one forbidden act of yours is sufficient to contract the disease, through the bacillus "*spirochaeta pallida*" in an infected person, so do thousands of dangers threaten your circle of acquaintances and others, as they may be innocently infected with this contagious disease by you, a despicable sinner. It may happen when your infected hands touch a door knob, or shake the hand of your best friend; or when you put a pencil in your mouth and it comes into other people's hands. It may be the barber's hair clippers or razor, or your spoon, your glass, your towel. Any of these articles may carry this disease to another. You will be a constant source of constantly-dreaded danger to all your fellow humans with whom you may be brought into contact. I once knew a fifteen-year-old boy whose palate was broken through by syphilis, and a communication established between the cavities of mouth and nose. This poor boy was as pure as snow, but it happened that during the summer holidays, while working among a gang of bricklayers, he drank from their common water-bottle.

If you had a particle of honesty in your make-up, you would push your mother away from you and cry out, "Go away, mother, and do not kiss me, because I am carrying a living hell within me." But when instead you kiss your mother hypocritically, you may be giving to her the infectious virus of your ignominious disease. And the dreadful part of it all is that the infected person at first does not notice the infection. Nothing apparently ails him,

and it is only afterwards, by chance, that he detects that something is amiss with him. Now do you realize the responsibility which rests upon your conscience? Oh! That first miserable, damned night of sin!

YOUR POOR CHILDREN.

PERHAPS you will even dare to found a family with such a malady! Should not your face burn and shrivel for shame, when you, with your ghastly disease, forever chain to yourself an innocent girl?—a girl who, in her tender years, had thought with sacred chastity of her future unblemished knight, of an ideal, upright husband; and you, a human wreck, fit food for hell, you bind this innocent girl to yourself for life, and pollute her. Such monstrous cases occur of beautiful, spotless girls falling prey to this consuming disease a few weeks after their marriage, and for years and decades painfully wasting away, dragging through life, stricken with a malady contracted from their husbands who sinned before marriage.

Afterwards children may be born to you. Little innocents, if only they had never been born! In the second or third year of their life signs of inherited syphilis appear in them, and the greater part of them die within six months, or, if they live, the inherited disease breaks out on them in their 'teens. They become weak and stunted, with bleared eyes, and pass the awful inheritance on to their children also. So does your miserable life strangle even your innocent grandchildren as a bloody malediction.

One venereal disease, gonorrhoea, besides its

many other baneful effects deprives a great many people of one of their greatest treasures—their eyesight. When its bacillus, the so-called gonococcus, gets into the eye—only the touch of an infected person is sufficient—a violent infection of the eye sets in, which results in blindness. In the Institute for the Blind at Munich, blindness was caused in 73.8% of the cases, by gonorrhoeal infection. I know of a family where a baby became blind shortly after birth. A second baby was born, and it also became blind in a short while; and then a third. The desperate parents could find no reason to account for this. Finally it was discovered that the father suffered from gonorrhoea, although he had entirely forgotten the sins of his youth, and the unfortunate man became insane with the thought that his sins had forever deprived his three children of the light of day. I often visit the Institute for the Blind at Budapest, and as I pass among these two hundred blind children and see them feeling their way with lustreless eyes, I think with deep agitation, “My God! The greater part of these children would not be blind if their parents had led a chaste life in their youth.”

Inmates of lunatic asylums, imbecile children, legions of the stunted and crippled, immeasurable misery, countless tragedies, give awful evidence of what may be the result of a young man indulging in only one forbidden sexual contact.

Do you think that the brief sexual pleasure is worth this price? How true were the words of the pagan Demosthenes, who replies to the inducements of an immoral girl: “*Tanti poenitere non emo!*”

(To pay such penalty for momentary lust is too dear for me!)

Slowly but surely the children pay the penalty, even up to the third and fourth generation, for the sins of their fathers. While, on the other hand, the children of one who has kept his blood unsullied, who has never contaminated himself before his marriage with immoral life, receive a patrimony more valuable than millions in material goods. "When I see the sunny brightness in my boy's eyes," a father once wrote to me—"when his strength and agility gladden me, when his youthful freshness and humor warm my heart, then I know it was worth my while to sweat and labor, because thereby I have promoted, not only my own interests, but those of coming generations as well."

SHATTERED HOPES.

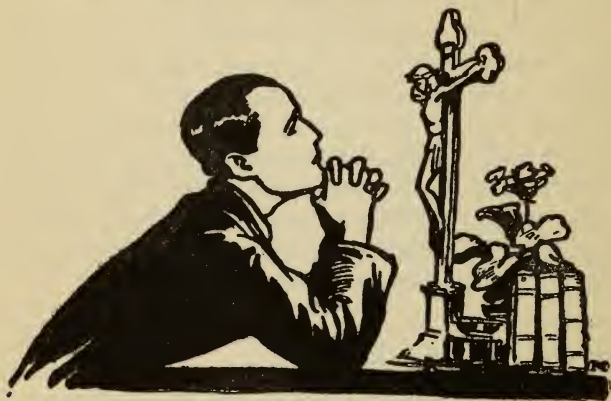
ONE morning I watched the river Tisza as it rolled along—a yellow, muddy expanse of water. "What is the cause of so much dirt?" I asked myself, for there had been no rain either here, or anywhere nearby. The next day I read in the newspaper that far away, at the head of the river, heavy showers had fallen, and the resultant rivulets had brought mud and silt into the river at its very source. It did not matter that mid-way in its course, and still further down no mud had entered it, nor that its tributaries were free from dirt.

My young man, this is a particularly meaningful symbol of life soiled in youth. It is a curse that people, even in their adulthood, can scarcely escape.

Remember, it is much easier to remain pure of

heart, than to wash a life spotless once it has become stained.

After the first and subsequent editions of this book, I received a great number of letters from its young readers. Reading some of these letters, I felt very numb and weak, and had but the strength to



look up into the face of my crucified Saviour standing before me on my desk, "Lord Jesus, help these poor, poor, struggling souls!" Most of them bewailed the first false step and the day when they fell for the first time and had no one to pull them back from the edge of the abyss.

On the following pages I am publishing a number of those letters without alteration, that you may benefit by them, and never take the tragic step which caused so much worry and bitterness, as expressed in these letters:

"Reverend Father:

I am at a loss how to begin. An irresistible force is prompting me to write. My story will perhaps be somewhat

lengthy, but if you will give me a hearing, you will put me at ease and raise hope in my broken soul.

I was the only hope of my widowed mother. Two years ago, when I left the parental home, she kissed me, and prayed God to shield me from evil. God helped me indeed. At first I was at the head of my class. But now I have failed in three subjects. Why? Because I came into the clutches of a sin—a curse—I do not know what—even its name is vile. I became its slave, and it preyed on both my body and soul. During the last Christmas holidays, visiting a friend, I chanced to see your book, and I read it. I cannot express in words what I felt. My soul was shaken to its very centre. Under the influence of this book I made a holy resolution that I would again enlist under the banner of the lily. And my strength has held out. It is now April, and I have not sinned once since your book came into my hands. It is saddening to see the life around me—the boys prying into Nature's forbidden secrets. Reverend Father, a number of boys here have resolved to mend their ways. I know my letter is fitful, but it is the result of the condition of my mind. Please write, if only a few words. You will make a soul happy."

Or read these shocking lines written by one of my former eminent students:

"Dear Reverend Father:

Outside, the north wind is howling and madly capering around trees and house tops; inside a cheery fire is burning and crackling. My feverish thoughts revert to the past, searching for the olden cheer, for the ringing tone of my voice, the smiling, friendly face . . . for the flowery beginning of my life. That was in times long since past. Since then dismal gray patches have mingled with the azure skies of existence, the faces of things are faded and worn, the golden bells of former joys are cracked and mute, and the white flowers of spring have died and fallen in the mire!

It is so comforting to break away at times from this desolation, which is choking me in its cold embrace, and roam in the green meadows of the past. Plans, aims, the foundations for the edifice of my future, thoughts of a period gone by, pass before me like fragments of glass of the kaleidoscope. It seems no longer ago than yesterday—yet I feel so bowed and old in my twenty-second year.

Some time ago I came across your writings, Reverend Father, and I felt a prompting to write to you about my intense misery. If only I could have done so sooner—but

no, though I knew, full well, that you would show the path that leads to a new life. My strength failed me; I began to shun people, the air, the daylight. It happened to me just as it does to one who, mistaking the poisonous growth of a swamp for flowers, grasps after them, only to find the soil give way under his feet, and clinging tentacles coil themselves around his struggling limbs.

All my life I have stood alone, because, in my pride, I would not ask for anybody's assistance. I tried to rely on my own resources . . . and I wanted . . . Oh, how often I wanted . . . to liberate myself. But the sacrificial smoke of my feeble will did not reach up into the heavens. Some adverse winds always drove it back to earth.

Reverend Father, I am turning now to you with the confidence of a former pupil—to ask your advice. I expect just a few lines from you, that they may instil a new hope in me . . . etc.”

A third letter:

“Dear Professor:

Forgive me, a stranger, for addressing you in this familiar manner, but your heaven-directed message with its profound import reached me, too, and has encouraged me to brush aside cold formalities and write and speak to you just as I am actuated by my feelings.

Having read your invaluable book—from whose every page Christ's love radiated—I was overcome by sincere repentance. It happens that I, too, am one of those unfortunates who began to go downwards on a certain path. To be more exact, I did not go down so much as I stood for years on the first downward step. Again and again I resolved that with God's help I would not do it again, yet again and again I fell, until during the last year and a half I realized I was rushing into frightful peril. I needed an adviser to stand by me in my continued relapses, but I had no one. Now I am almost past redemption. Since reading your book my soul is tormented by burning remorse at the thought that I, myself, have been the cause of the early loss of my vitality, perhaps of my early death. My companions are so healthy and vigorous, and I am so weak and stunted. However, I deserve it!”

Another letter:

“I am crying to you, Reverend Father, from the bottom of the abyss to help me—if it is still possible—if it is not too late. Just three hours ago I again committed the sin which

has enslaved me for three years. It has so utterly demoralized me that I feel as if something had been killed within me. There seems to be such a dreary emptiness, as if my soul were completely annihilated. I am afraid I cannot carry this burden much longer. It is crushing my whole being with irresistible force. I would be better off in the grave, deep under the earth, where my tyrannical body could decay without causing me such awful misery.

Reverend Father, let me show you frankly all the blackness, all the filth of my life. Even though I feel it is all too



late, an unexplainable impulse compels me, drives me to make a last attempt to fly to someone for refuge, and ask for help.

When I was ten I saw my playmates doing something to themselves. I tried it once, and then a thousand times. Oh, if there had only been someone to warn me in time, I wouldn't be haunted now by sweet memories of my youth. I wouldn't hear the tolling in my ears like a mournful bell, the unceasing refrain, 'There is no joy in your past, and no hope for your future'. It is too late; all is over.

What joy it would be to start life anew—to live purely and happily. How often the illusion darts through my mind, lightning-like, that this ugly life is but a dream, and that upon waking, I will again find myself a happy, unsullied boy. Wakening does come, but it is so bitter and

so sad. After the first fall I went downhill faster and faster. At first, my conscience shrieked and cried out against it, but lust proved to be an efficient narcotic, and gradually the voice of my conscience became ever fainter, and my body an ever stronger master. No one heard my forlorn, piteous weeping. No one stopped me as I went hurtling down into the precipice. I did not dare tell my parents, I could not confide in others, as I was ashamed of my abnormality. Now at times I am in a stupor, at times a nervous distemper. I cannot concentrate on study. Nothing interests me. My soul is burned out, shrivelled up, empty!—so empty! There is no escape. After abstaining from sinning for one or two weeks, I helplessly fall again, because life seems too dull without sensual pleasures. *Delight has practically killed my soul.* I have no faith in anything. There is no escape but in death, but now I cannot even muster determination enough to commit suicide. I am living death. My mental faculties are dulled. All is over. Sin is killing me. I feel I am on my way to the grave. I am bankrupt in body, soul and mind.

Reverend Father, I beseech you, if you think there is still a way to help, do so. Help me out of my misery."

Still another missive:

"I can scarcely express in words what I felt when I read your book, and reflected on its contents. But I was emboldened to approach you with this excitedly-written letter. Oh, I am going insane! Your kind book has aroused in me repentance and contrition. You probably know what I want to tell you. It refers to the lines in your book, 'How many youths have sobbed out their laments in the mute darkness of desperate nights.' Why did no one warn me in time, of the terrible consequences of this sin? How right you are. I, too, am suffering. I am groaning under the yoke of this wretched habit, taught me by a bad man.

Please advise a poor boy, who has searched long for the right path, and found it in your book. I am ashamed that I, formerly so successful as a student, and worker, could have flung away those noble things for a few moments' pleasure. But where passions storm, reason is muzzled. Isn't it so?"

Another letter:

"Today, by God's grace, a day of rejoicing has dawned for me, and I cannot better preserve the memory of this joyous day than by expressing my thanks to you, Reverend and dear Father, for your efforts. For—as you wrote—'The

great reward for my efforts shall be if I shall have set right even a single boy, and shall have kept the development of his soul in the right path.' I am happy today because this applies to me, and because I am able to present you with a fresh laurel wreath for your efforts. Your wish has been fulfilled. If, until now, you had no other, you now have one spiritual son who has been directed towards the right goal and is following the right path in his development. My parents gave me an education in virtue and godliness, and I endeavored to live up to and foster it, but when I was fourteen, I came in contact with bad company. I avoided them as much as I could, but sometimes I listened to their conversation and saw them doing improper things. They thought my blushes hugely amusing. But I did not mind them. Then, one day, I hardly know how it happened, I caught myself doing the very same thing. Afterwards I felt nervous and tired. Tearfully I now remember my first misdeed. No one told me to refrain from doing it, except my infallible conscience. Then I repeated it time after time.

Now I am ashamed of it. I did not realize that God sees everything. I did not know what I was doing; I just had vague misgivings. I would not tell my poor parents. I thought to spare them the painful knowledge that their son was polluting himself. The full significance of my unchaste acts was revealed to me by your book, which I finished reading today. Immediately I made a solemn resolution to become pure and honest once more. I feel it will be easy to keep my vow, for since I have made it, I already experience an unusual buoyancy of spirits, and see everything around me changing to a sunny world. I am smiling, and the world is smiling with me.

I am sure I will not trade this newly-found happiness for my former wretchedness. No, I will not be such a fool, and besides, I give my word of honor to you and to myself."

Yet another letter:

"My body is still racked with sobs; the pages of your blessed book are still wet with my tears. My fingers are too limp to hold the pen, and I am gasping for breath as I begin to pen these lines. Kindly read them if you deem them worthy.

How shall I start? Five years ago there was a cursed moment in my life, too. The strings of my silver-toned violin snapped. A young, proud oak was split in twain. The sun set in the sky of my life, and dusk fell. For pity's sake, why did not complete darkness fall at once. It would not have been so bitter, so doleful, so dreadfully long, as

to see the dusk gradually falling . . . falling . . . the shadows creeping over my young life! And the knowledge that I knew it was sin, saddens me so much more. I knew that there was One to help me. Lord Jesus was extending His saving hands to me all the while. Yet I did not grasp at them, although there was not a single occasion when I did not repent at once. After the first sin, I promised myself it would be the last. Alas, I had not the strength to stop.

The thought that I may confess in a few faltering words is already soothing the awful aching that is in my soul. After I fell into the clutches of this hateful sin of self-pollution, I could not be frank with anyone. I avoided the companionship of honest people; I felt out of place among them. I made no advancement in my studies whatsoever. Contentment with anything was out of the question. My life since then has been one long, harrowing, struggle. The reason that I did not finish it all, that I did not hang myself, is that in a little town, far away, I have a mother who loves me, and whose blessed hands often rise, perhaps every day, in supplication to God, asking Him to bless her son, and keep him on the path of virtue. Oh, if she knew—how fortunate that she does not—her heart would break. I just write her that I am well.

Then I joined the boy scouts, hoping that I might find refuge among them. But no, I did not feel at ease in the company of those honest, cheerful faces. I did not dare return home to mother. Instead I took to the road, and drifted far away from home, trying to flee from it all. But I could not flee from myself. Then one day I happened to read your work, and since then everything has changed. Now I am prostrating myself before God, and my heart is singing grateful praise to Him for having made your hand and pen the means of my salvation. For you write, 'A comeback is always possible. At any time one can begin a new life if he willeth'. Father, I am weak, but I can gather sufficient strength to put my trembling hands into yours, look trustfully into your eyes and say: 'With God's help, I will, if found worthy, walk in the ranks of my brothers marching under the flag of Purity'. Lord Jesus help me, I want to be pure again!"

Just read this despairing letter written by an older student to his friend:

". . . . You have shown me deep sympathy in my great sadness, and I wonder why I cannot find consolation. But

you do not know the most shocking thing about me. Oftentimes I was about to tell you, but the confession would not come from my lips. Now listen to me, and—despise me. While everyone praised and showered affection upon me, I secretly contaminated myself with a detestable sin, which became a habit. This is my sickness. The darkest melancholy preys on my mind. I willingly submit myself to the physical punishment, but the most crushing thought is that my mind also is out of order. My mind simply does not function properly. Scientific work only pains me, my thoughts are rambling, my imagination is constantly playing with unclean images, which will not let me rest however I may curse them and rave against them. Where have I sunk! Naturally you would say I ought to pray. Gladly would I do so, but I cannot. I am beyond help. I have often marked the day, the hour, and the place that I would shoot myself, but the faces of my parents always appear before my mind. My dear, good parents have no inkling of what an ungrateful person they are wasting their affections on. Shall I plunge them into inexpressible misery by taking my own life? This is the only thought which holds me back. Come to see me as soon as you can. Perhaps it would be better if you did not come. I am unworthy of it. Pray for me, that God may have mercy upon me, if there is still mercy for me."

The following letter was written by a youth, to his friend who had asked the poor, sinning boy to turn to me, as perhaps I could still lend him a helping hand. He received the shocking reply:

"Dear Friend:

I know you have been waiting for me, yet I did not come. Do not feel offended because I have kept you waiting, since my mind is practically deranged and my spiritual sensibilities lie in a torpor.

I did not come because I have completely given up all hope for a successful reform, and am leaving further developments to nature's law of extinction. My remaining days can easily be counted. I realize that my sufferings here on earth are the beginning of eternal damnation. I wish I could repent of my sin, but I have no strength—no faith to do so. For two months I suffered the agony of Calvary, but I could not reform.

In a small way, little changes have taken place in my

soul, but just through fear. Now I feel an utter indifference to the world, and am waiting for the fall of the curtain.

Do not bother about me any longer. Only God can help me.

Greetings from your friend—if you still regard me as such.”

After a few months this young man died.

STUDENT SUICIDES.

THUS we see a promising career trampled in the dust—like an eagle created to soar to lofty heights—struggling in the swamp, its wings broken; a manly character—shattered; a youthful life—ruined. Here is a youth, who, in his enthusiasm, may have aspired to be the world’s liberator, straining at his chains in unspeakable misery; a spirit once so fiery and animated by great plans for the future, now broken and bent under the weight of ill-fate—because he did not protect the tender buds of spring from May frosts.

Add to all this the reproaches of his conscience, which will sooner or later raise her voice, and the fear of the moral and physical consequences of his misdeeds, and it becomes clear that his soul is bound to be encompassed by the Stygian darkness of melancholy and despair. Yet, this poor boy lived scarcely one score years. So here on earth are fulfilled the words of Holy Scripture speaking of punishment in the world hereafter: “The whoremongers shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone.” (Apoc. 21, 8.)

There are boys whose will power has been weakened to such an extent, that, even when they realize the consequences of their evil habit, their

best intentions are swept away like so much paper, in the onslaught of passion. The result is that after they repeat these sins in spite of all their vows, their soul becomes filled with morbid bitterness, and, in a nervous state, verging on insanity, they break and smash whatever they lay their hands on. But it is all in vain—they cannot break those fetters. Take this case of a youth who recently committed suicide. He was a splendid character, a hard worker, the sole support of his widowed mother. With commendable moral earnestness he refused his companions' frequent invitations to places where immorality was practised. His religious education and the command of God were his protection. But his companions would not desist from their evil designs. It is characteristic of one who indulges in immorality, that he is constantly spurred on by a restless conscience to lead innocence into the same corruption. Again and again his friends tried to seduce him, mocking him, encouraging him, until at last he gave in. In a short time, grim disease had imprinted its mark on the youth's soul and body, that had been overflowing with health and vigor. He could not carry this terrible burden, and it was not long until he threw his detestable life away. Beside his corpse they found a slip of paper, the only bequest to his poor mother. It read, "Mother, forgive me, and pray for me."

People pitied the unfortunate boy, but you know that he himself was the cause of his downfall. He wanted to pluck forbidden flowers, and in doing so, strayed into a jungle of poisonous weeds, and was strangled in their embrace. Deliberately he revolted

against God's commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and what man can revolt against God's laws with impunity?

We cannot go further. We have come to the bottom of the abyss. This is the lowest pit of corruption! We are familiar with the scene now—blind youths rushing madly after tempting thrills, satisfying their senses with beguiling shapes, hanging on the lips of voluptuousness . . . and the other scene, in which those who have regained their eyesight, see that their thrills were ugly spiders crawling over them, that the shapes were clammy snakes discharging poison into them, and that the lips belonged to awful vampires, sucking their blood. Disease, misery, ropes around their necks, death, and lastly—worms feasting on their bodies. . . . This is hell itself—a hell on earth.

Let us pity them, for the enchanting beauties of a misty future are forever veiled from them.

We often read of youths, sixteen, eighteen years of age, committing suicide because they are weary of life. Weary of life at sixteen! Think of it! A boy who scarcely knows anything of life, with great tasks worthy of a man awaiting him, weary of life! The explanation of these suicides in youth is moral straying.

Upon the path of passion follows pain,
After bright froth of lust, dark care you drain,
The murky mists of ecstasy depart,
And day's clean lancet probes your inmost heart.

Oh, I was ready to pay interest
For crowded pleasures, blissful but unblest,
I loaded high my life with fierce desires
And scorched my frantic heart in its own fires.

I was not temperate in anything;
No waste could satisfy my wantoning.
Greedy I swallowed down—insensate—blind—
Whatever hot occasion I could find.

A wretched usury! Ah, now, how black,
How hard and painful is the paying back.
Until my spirit is compelled to say
No more, no more, by heaven! I will not pay!

—from "Expiation" by Julius Reviczky.



V. CHAPTER

BATTLING THE SEVEN- HEADED DRAGON.

NOW, my dear young man, look at me and let me gaze deep into your eyes! Ah! . . . that is what I wanted to see . . . a flame of stubborn resistance is burning in your eyes. Your heart is beating with great and sacred vows. Your lips are mutely trembling under the strain of momentous resolutions. These burning eyes and flaming heart, even though your lips be mute, indicate a grand decision conceived in the depths of your soul! "No, with the help of God, I will not sin against purity. Let the world collapse, let the earth quake and tremble, let the stars fall upon me, but I will not sin! No, no, never! . . ." *Malo Mori, quam foedari!* Better death than the rottenness of sin.

Yes, my young man, that is what I wanted. Look at me again. So you do not wish to come to this? . . . You do not wish to fall from the tree of humanity like unripe fruit! You do not want to trample on the flower garden of your soul with dirty coarse boots! You do not want to have to avoid the eyes of your mother or sister, who look at you in puzzled wonder! You do not want to be a miserable carrier of destructive bacilli! You do not want to become a constant danger to, and a contaminator of your fellow men! You do not want to make of your young body a shattered wreck, dragging wearily! You do not want to become the very scum of the earth! You do not want to destroy your health, character and honesty! *No, you do*

not want these things to happen! I see it in your eyes!

My dear young man, have no fear! If your will be as inflexible, as earnest as your resolutions, you will not come to this.

THERE IS A COMEBACK.

BUT I see painful and sorrowful shadows in your eye, as if gloom had been cast over your mind. I see remembrances, dejecting and dreary. Hateful memories of sins committed in ignorance are haunting you; and habitual sin is holding you in its powerful toils, pressing you to remain. An indescribable anguish is shrieking in your soul! "Why did I not read this book two or three years ago?" I can see you struggling with your doubts, your waverings, your despairing grief.

Now, having read the preceding chapters, I am sure you have received a beneficial understanding, by the light of which you realize with apprehension, that in your tender years, perhaps even before your 'teens, you performed some improper actions. At that time you perhaps did not have any inkling of their wickedness, and it is only now that you understand, by your clarified eyes. But perhaps a startling thought fastens itself upon your mind: "Then I am morally corrupt . . . my soul's shrine has fallen into ruins long ago! . . ." No, my dear young man, you must not lose heart! Everyone is responsible for his evil deeds only to the extent that he was conscious of their wickedness at the time of committing them. The Almighty knows whether the slips of your childhood are to be classed as sins,

and if so, to what extent. So, do not waste your time in bemoaning your old sins, committed in ignorance, but make a start towards a new, ideal way of life! Do not muse over what has been, up to now, but be gladdened by the prospect of the pure life that lies before you. You have not fallen for good, nor has the shrine of your soul collapsed forever. Now do not pronounce the word you were about to utter. No, I will not let you.

There is no such word! At least, not from a young man. Do not even think of uttering the terrible words, "Too late," "Too late for me." I know what you mean, but it is not true! Why if we are late with anything, so much more urgent is it to make up for it.

You are familiar with Christ's parable of the prodigal son, who, claiming his rich patrimony, and obtaining it, left his father's home. Far from home, he squandered everything. Then, driven by hunger, he took service as a herder of swine, and to appease his hunger, ate the husks that were thrown to the swine. At last, in his utter misery and humiliation, a ray of hope flickered in his soul, "I will return to my father's house; he may have compassion on me." And lo, the father embraced his prodigal son with joy, forgiveness overflowing in his heart.

The prodigal son needed a strong will and firm resolution to bring about this happy ending. Like the clinging weeds of a swamp, the strength of habit detained him, and weighed him down. But he cut loose all the tangle of this swamp, gained firm ground, and with inflexible determination, spurred on by the hope of a better future, started home to

his father's house. Even in the most depraved man, there still flickers a spark of goodness, perceived only by one who loves and trusts him. My boy, you may have rent and torn your lovely soul; where the temple of purity stood there may only be a crumbling habitation—but that is not the point now, all I ask of you is to believe in yourself. Unwavering faith! Think of the wisdom in Seneca's words: "*Pars sanitatis velle sanari fuit.*" (The will to be healthy is the first step towards recovery.)

I know several high school and university students who, through their playmates, became acquainted with this sin in their childhood. First they took it up as an interesting addition to their pastimes. Later, when their eyes were opened to the loathsomeness of these acts, the habit already held them in its grasp like a mighty tyrant. But in spite of this, they bravely threw themselves into the hard struggle. They battled long and hard. Again and again they fell. But now, on the threshold of manhood, having fought their battles bravely, they proudly wear laurels of victory in their happy and healthy faces. An idea of the ineffable joy which brightens up such a soul can be gathered from this line in a letter I received from one of those brave boys: "I would not give one day of my present life in exchange for my whole past."

If one return in time to the garden of the lilies, to a life of purity, he has naught to fear of the physical after-effects of self-pollution. The sooner he returns, the sooner will his youthful system recover from any damage that may have been done. "One careless act of ours suffices to wreck our

happiness completely," Count Stephen Szechenyi writes in his diary. But, he also adds encouragingly, "No man, however, has sunk so low that there can be no comeback for him. All sinners can redeem themselves."

FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR COUNTRY.

MY dear young man, you are no doubt a proud and loyal son of your country. That is as it should be. But, do you know that when a youth deliberately loses his purity of soul he becomes, by that very act, a despicable traitor to his nation's future? *Do you realize that the future state of a nation depends on the present state of its youth?*

It commonly happens that the children and grandchildren of the wealthy who have inherited money, but no morality, are failures, and soon go down in the world. The same applies to an entire nation. No statesmanship, however excellent or shrewd, can avert its decline and ultimately its entire collapse, if a gradually-spreading immorality be vitiating its youth, and sapping its strength.

Somewhere I have read that Satan once held a review of his forces. The spirits of anger, envy, intemperance, immorality, and all the others, assembled and contended among themselves to decide as to whom should go the honor of having inflicted the greatest damage on humanity. Satan at last adjudged the first place to the vice of immorality, saying: "It possesses the keenest sword and the deadliest poison, for it is able to destroy entire nations."

Reading the famous work, "Germania," of Tacitus, the Roman historian, we can readily understand the causes which brought about the downfall of the Roman Empire, the mistress of the then-known world. At that time, when this empire had been undermined by universal looseness of morals, and was near collapse, Tacitus wrote these lines in praise of the virtues of the Teutonic tribes living along the northern boundaries of the empire: "Such is the daily life of woman under the protection of clean morality. She is not corrupted by erotic theatricals, and does not take part in gluttonous, exciting collations, banquets. . . . Among these populous tribes a breach of conjugal fidelity is of rare occurrence. Its punishment instantaneous and is the right of the husband. In the presence of the relatives, the wife, naked, her hair cut off, is beaten and driven out of the house, to the confines of the village. No mercy is shown to a woman who loses her virtue. Neither beauty, nor youth, nor wealth will obtain another husband for her. These people do not smile indulgently over immorality. They do not call seduction and the resulting fall the spirit of the times. . . ."

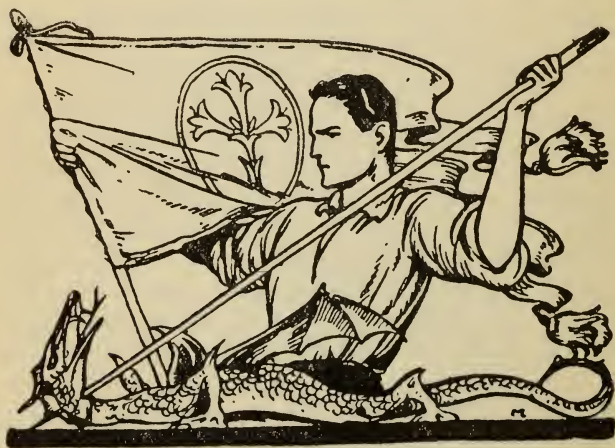
These days we can hardly believe that such a rigorous outlook obtained among those pagan Teutons. At all events, there is reason for us civilized Christian people to blush with shame when it comes to a comparison of our moral standards with theirs.

As the fountain-head of the dynamic and expansive strength of those Northern people, Tacitus named their inexhausted sprouting vigor, their youthfulness:

"Youth that loves its homeland and is wisely provident . . ." writes a famous professor of medicine—"ought to think thus: I will avail myself of all my energies in order to become a useful member of society. To this end, and that I may not ruin myself prematurely during my adolescence, I will practise absolute continence, train my will power, harden my body, and widen the scope of my knowledge. Then I shall seek to obtain a position with sufficient income to maintain a family. When I shall have accomplished this, I shall marry with the hope of raising worthy members for society, and live happily in the circle of my family."

The Boy Scout movement, one of the noblest influences at work in the international relations of the people of the world, sets down these principles with regard to morality, to serve as guidance in the daily life of its members: "Unpolluted life-blood is the foundation of the strength and greatness of nations. Unchastity defiles God's image in man, weakens his body, contaminates his imagination, dulls his mind, kills his character, and cause the decay of nations. Guard your soul's purity with sacred self-esteem. Do not let any kind of unchastity tempt you, however brilliant its exterior, because it covers internal filth and decay. Avoid the company of corrupt people, double-meaning and smutty conversation, books, performances—everything that might lead you into unchastity. Look for things and occupations that give you strength. Continence, earnest work, noble amusements, manly self-denial, friendship according to spiritual affinity; all will aid you against unchastity."

The saying goes: "A boy is a nobody who may become somebody." You who read this book, bear in mind that today you are only boys, but tomorrow you may become your nations' leaders; you are the future of your people; with each and every one of your acts you plant goodness or wickedness, the harvest of which will also be a crop of goodness or wickedness. You may not realize it yet, but the treasure of any nation, more valuable than all her railway systems, forests, diamond, gold or coal



mines, colonies, dreadnaughts, or vast industries, is her pure-hearted, vigorous, unpolluted youth, enthusiastic in spirit and capable of work.

We cannot count upon spiritless, spineless, effeminate, pleasure-seeking, degenerate youth to do anything creditable. We cannot expect youth, weakened in its 'teens, and wasted in its twenties, to carry on and perfect the work of its fathers.

Admiral Nelson, immediately before the naval battle of Trafalgar began, gave this famous order to his ships by flag signals: "England expects every man to do this duty." Your duty is to prize *the purity of your soul and life-blood as the essence of happiness and future usefulness to yourself and society*, and to resist any attempt to defile it.

THE LILY—YOUTH'S EMBLEM.

THE world was torn and disrupted, and shaken to its very foundation by the Great War. Its after-effects have been general demoralization, poverty, and a ferment of new ideas. The nations of the world have struggled hard to keep afloat, but they have repaired but little of the immense damage and destruction. The great part of the work of reconstruction, of reform, is still awaiting those who will devote themselves to it. Who are they? Not the older generation, for their life spans but the past and present. It is the younger generation, the youth of today, for they link the present with the future.

The world and its nations must rely upon youth to rebuild the cracked and crumbling structures of human relations and welfare. They are in need of youthful enthusiasm and youthful bodies, young men of deep learning and skill, of directness of purpose and unweakened morality.

What is the source of these qualities called for in youth? The source is the sacred spring of Virtue and Purity, two things that must be present in, and diffused through the spiritual and intellectual life of a nation, if it is really concerned about its welfare and progress.

Purity and Virtue—these twin sisters—the greatest and firmest foundation stones of national structures. Remove them, and downfall is presently on its way.

Rambling in woodlands, in Nature's serene retreats, we often find ourselves in a dell of loveliness, where a spring is welling up from under the earth, forming little limpid pools, and splashing with a merry tinkle over mossy boulders. In the cool and nourishing closeness of the spring is the soil, where the tender bell flowers, the timid lilies-of-the-valley, the happy forget-me-nots, and the high aiming lilies live their graceful life, and lend the landscape the color of a fairyland.

A lily, proud yet gentle, straight without a curve, spotless like falling snow, aspiring, growing to heights; a beautiful, proud, dreaming lily. What a concordant symbol of youth.

Lilies adorning, gladdening and scenting the landscape.

Youth, adorning, animating, breathing purity into its nation and humanity.

Lilies thriving in the proximity of Nature's pure spring.

Youth drinking in the sacred waters from the Spring of Purity and Virtue, filling itself with this spiritual fluid, passing it on to others, and to the future.

Youth that understands what the lily, its emblem stands for, and preserves the integrity of the lily, its soul's purity, in its maturing years, is the mainstay and the greatest forwarding force of the nation's welfare and advancement.

A nation in whose body this type of youth is maturing, however backward in other respects, will soon become a leader, a centre of wisdom and learning, and a land of happiness.

FOR THE HAPPINESS OF YOUR SOUL.

SAD experience has taught humanity the lesson that the Creator's plans are the best after all.

"What use to God," says Holy Scripture, "if you be honest? Or what do you give to Him if your life remain pure?" (Job 22, 3.) Whether you keep God's sixth commandment or not—God will neither profit nor come to harm by it. His eternal purposes will nonetheless be achieved. Without you or in spite of you. *On the other hand, it is of tremendous consequences that you conform your life to His laws, for this course will guarantee not only your earthly happiness, but also your fate in the life hereafter.*

I know you well, my young man, your ideals are manly and chivalrous, the ideals of the perfect man. But for this very reason, you must take into consideration that, to perfect manly character pertains commensurate will power, a world-molding will power, always capable of aiding the better half of our nature—our spiritual endeavors in gaining dominance over our lower impulses. You know well that although your sexual impulses make their appearance rather soon, years before marriage, that does not mean that you should gratify them; neither to such demands have they any claim.

If you desire to attain some day the manly character as yet only an ideal in your imagination,

mark that you have to merit it by a good amount of hard work. To win the epithet: "This young man is a real character," you have to exert yourself considerably. Character is not just a birthday present deposited on your table ready for use, but a treasure acquired by conscious endeavor.

If you climb a high mountain you will perspire not a little before you reach its summit. The higher our aim is, the more ardent the labor it exacts from us. A more sublime aim than the immaculate molding of his character, no youth can set before himself. For this ideal, therefore, go forth to battle. Be proud and defiant! Hurl your defiance into the face of the attacking enemy: "*Ad maiora natus sum!*" (*I was born for greater purposes!*) And be game to the last!

A LIFELONG COMBAT.

IN this struggle great issues are at stake. The question is whether you will allow yourself to desert the post as helmsman of your ship to listen to the luring song of the sirens, your sexual impulses, and let your rudderless ship drift off its course to be dashed on the rocks. Or will you hold your post of duty at the helm and steer your soul's ship with a strong grip and self-control through a thousand narrow, rocky straits of entrancing temptations of youth, towards clear water, towards the wide expanse of the future, where manhood, an independent master's rank, and great exploits are in store for you.

I am glad to see you are not dallying in making choice between these issues; you are heart and soul

siding with goodness. For, as I gaze into your eyes I see resoluteness and will flashing there. Then I hear your answer: "I am ready, I will fight, I will go through fire and water to succeed."

Well said, my young man! There is just one warning I wish to stress. Do not let your heart sink, if, after a thousand efforts the battle shows no signs of abating, and even after a thousand victories gained, you find yourself in the heat of combat.

Bear in mind, your soul's purity is constantly attacked by a seven-headed dragon in the literal meaning of the word. When you chop off one of its heads another grows in its place. You cannot annihilate it while young blood is coursing through your veins. If today you be victorious over it, you do not know from which side it may attack you tomorrow. From your sixteenth to your twenty-fourth year, or thereabouts, you are confronted by the dragon without respite. In later years its onslaughts will be less vehement, but it will never completely desist from its murderous designs on you, and still later, when the staidness of earnest manhood will have damped the fires of passion, you will still have to stand guard in defence of your precious treasure.

Think of those three youths who were cast into a fiery furnace by the pagan King of Babylon for their faith. Around them the flames blazed with infernal heat, but those heroic young men went about in the inferno unharmed, a hymn of victory bursting forth from their lips. Try to recall that victory at times when the smoldering fires of fleshly temptations flame up within you.

You are prone to complain of the constant struggle you have to wage to safeguard your purity. But do you not see that life, in its entirety, is nothing but a ceaseless struggle. Everything in nature that doesn't struggle, that prefers inertness, that is not in motion, must eventually rot and moulder away. Now, such being the case, that we have to struggle for everything, should we spare our efforts only when our soul's purity is at issue?

The thought should give you strength, that, while during all your life you will have temptations, no power can force you to lay down your arms to capitulate—unless you yourself will to do so.

Fortify yourself with the knowledge that your struggles are never hopeless. If your soul be still intact and pure you can continue to preserve it so, though, it is true, not without taking pains; if, however, you have any serious false steps to bewail, if you have even sunk very deep, you can still hope to repair the past by a humble and purified life, and persistent effort in the same.

The struggle against your own self is your fiercest battle, but, on the other hand, the most glorious victory any man can win, is the victory over SELF.

RESIST.

YOUR friends will soon become aware of your worthy resolutions. It will strike them how far your moral outlook has overpassed theirs. They will notice that you have changed your ways, that you are no longer pleased with their obscene jests and their satanic grins; that you do not longer choose to wallow in the mire with them.

Yes, soon they notice it—and presto! a vigorous offensive is launched against you. They will bait you, mock and deride you, and endeavor to pick a quarrel at every turn.

On this subject I wish to speak to you particularly, since I am well aware that many a noble effort has been wrecked, shot to pieces in the barrage of ridicule. The victim is jollied and made fun of till the good resolutions formed are swept away by human respect and the naughty self-consciousness of the poor hobbledehoy.

“I never knew you were such a coward, such a sanctimonious mug . . .” fly the arrows of sarcasm. “Look, what a baby! He has not yet got past thumb-sucking! Well, you mustn’t come with us if you are such a milksop!” “What! I a coward, a baby?” you will bluster out when they have worked you up to a fever pitch. “Wait, boys, I am going with you!”

In some such manner has many a boy fallen into the clutches of sin for the first time. He wanted to put an end to the hecklings. In the second or third attack, no goading was found necessary.

This danger is especially grave if your circumstances compel you to share the same quarters with companions whose moral outlook lies far under your noble ideals. To remain good among good people is not difficult. But to remain white in the midst of dirt, to remain a lily in a sewer—that indeed calls for unbending character and a show of manly will-power. Not a few young men who had succeeded in safe-keeping their physical and spiritual purity in the protected and supervised atmosphere of their

school life, have come to grief and have been despoiled of their moral rectitude later by the ridicule of their new environment, when they stepped up into university, or out into social life, where wider scope was afforded them to show their strength or their weakness of character. Here was the test, and they failed just because they did not want to appear "cowards".

Ah! if they had considered where real courage dares, and where real cowardice flinches!

WHO IS THE COWARD?

ARE you, then, to be called a coward because you want to keep yourself pure?

Just think for a moment which requires a greater exercise of will, a steelier strength; to resist inflexibly the onslaughts of the sexual instinct, or to helplessly sway like a reed before the weakest breath of the lower-class desired of your body. . . . Who is the better horseman? he who governs his horse as he pleases, or he whose horse bolts away with him, shaking and jouncing him, and finally tossing him into a roadside ditch?

Bad companions will taunt and deprecate you: "What a milksop you are, you haven't even spunk enough for *this!*" Are you really such a baby? But think, does not manliness mean self-control and will power? Is not he the weakling, the unsteady, who, when tempted, submits feebly to the illicit demands of his senses?

Be a man then, not a puppet! Who is more likely to gain the esteem of adult people, too? Is it not the gritty youth who, undeterred by the

mockery and banter of his companions, continues to follow the straight path which he took after an earnest consultation with his conscience? I would take off my hat in the presence of such a young man, knowing that the words of Holy Scripture refer to him: "By his life he manifested admirable heroism." (Eccl. 31, 9.)

What a sorry sight—youth being led into sin like sheep, by a few foul-mouthed scamps. Imitating everything is a characteristic of apes, is it not? Only that boy can be called a strong character who is daring enough to swim against the current of wrong-doing. If a boy knows that he is on the right path, he should not let bad example deflect him from his course. Might not the character need a change for the same reason as the shirt does?

Don't think you show cowardice when you avoid sensual pleasures of low people, or shudder at them. Can humanity be accused of cowardice when it flees in alarm from the bacilli of contagious diseases? And could your companion be called courageous if, coming somewhere upon an ill-smelling pool, he "courageously" stirs it up with his tongue, inhales its fetid stench, and takes a bath in it? Read what the heathen philosopher Epictetos has to say in this connection: "Do not be afraid to do what you sincerely believe is right, even if it clash with the opinions of the crowd. If your acts be incorrect, improper, be ashamed of them. If, on the other hand, they be correct and proper, why be afraid of fault-finders?"

Indeed, spirit and flesh fight their fiercest duel on the field of sexual morality. Only the one who

conquers on this field can pride himself in being a truly manly character. "The youth having no courage to stand by his decisions is like the swaying reed when it comes into the grip of the storm; it sighs and bows compliantly, but the sighs and bows will not check the opposing elements." (Baron J. Eotvos.) Alas, the greater number of youths are very inconstant; they do not resolve to give direction to their own lives, and so are swept off their feet, and blown like leaves before the foul-mouthed, blatant air of bad companions.

BREAK WITH THEM.

THE situation may arise where you will have no choice but to break for good with your former friend. On a couple of occasions it may suffice to show that you do not find his wit and trashy jokes entertaining. Let your countenance reflect how you regard his indecent witticisms. Tell him plainly that you look upon a garbage heap as a garbage heap, even when sprinkled with perfume, and that you do not enjoy using a muck rake. Your friend will soon perceive that your moral sense has been offended, and you will have driven home a good lesson. It is indeed a tacit insult that your friend should take it for granted that you, too, find enjoyment in smutty talk. So did Alexander the Great construe it as an insult to his moral rectitude when, at the height of his heroic career, proposals were made to him to introduce luxury and sensuality into his court after the manner of the court-life of Eastern potentates. Alexander, however, realizing that his own and his warriors' martial virtues would soon

be undermined in an atmosphere of luxury and easy morals, wisely refused to listen to such proposals. You, too, ought to take it as a "slap in the face" when anyone undervalues your moral integrity by introducing obscene conversation. Tell such a one openly that the dignity of your soul and character is outraged by such conversation; that the realms of mind and of spirit are so extensive that we can talk almost endlessly about worthy and interesting subjects without entering the sexual sphere.

If, however, your friend will not understand your plain warning, then tell him that your sense of decency will not allow you to associate with a dweller of the stables, and break with him, no matter what ties of friendship may have linked you to him.

Open your ears to the earnest words of Jesus Christ: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." (Matthew 18, 9.) If your friend scandalize you, leave him. Better for you to enter into eternal bliss without him, than into eternal damnation with him! I know, it will perhaps be hard on you, but consider that an individual giving vent to obscenity at every turn, mixing bawdiness with every subject he talks about, is unworthy of your friendship. True friendship can exist only between good people. If you continued to carry on intimate association with your "friend" you would become his confederate, his accomplice. In the same way the members of a gang of thieves are not one another's friends, but accomplices. Have the courage to ask this friend, "What right

have you to continue to walk on your two feet, with your low way of thinking; what right have you to befool the world—why don't you crawl on all fours and lie down in the puddle among your lovely grunting friends, that is, if they will suffer you amongst them?"

This is rather an unusual comparison, but a telling one: when someone's stomach turns, and he vomits, normal people will not stop to enjoy the spectacle; and when a sick-souled youth disgorges in his talks the filth of a diseased mind, an honest person will not listen. A doctor only has to look at a patient's tongue to diagnose the nature of his ailment; you, too, ought to be able to tell by the language of your friend wheher his soul is unhealthy.

When at the beginning of a battle the small army of Alexander the Great began to be overawed by the sight of the Persian host deploying before them in an ever more formidable array, their leader inspired them with the words: "What are you afraid of? The enemy has many men, but few soldiers!" Why did he speak thus? Because he knew the Persian morals were loose, and looseness of morals soon kills a soldier's valor. Yes, my young man, courage is what you need! Sometimes a reproving glance will suffice to stifle immodest words on the tongues of those whom the Latin poet Horace described as "*amica luto sus*," "filth-loving hogs." (Epist. 1, 2.)

If thou'rt a man, be manlike;
Have faith and fortitude.
Stand steadfast for thy pure belief
And seal it with thy blood.

Better, a hundred times, to give
Thy life, unmarr'd by stain!
'Tis little if thy life be lost,
If honor still remain.

—Alexander Petofi.

“WHY, IT WON’T DO ME ANY HARM.”

DON’T deceive yourself with the excuse that “this exciting book, that indecent picture, this immoral performance, that bad friend, won’t do me any harm.” It is a grievous mistake. Such talk indicates that you don’t know how strong in man is the imitative instinct.

Whatever we do, we spontaneously, almost unconsciously, ask ourselves: “Do other people do this in the same way as I do?” No one can free himself from the power of imitative instinct. Our reading, our observations, our associations, all have an unavoidable irrespressible influence on our general behavior. No, there is no one able to entirely escape the influence of his surroundings. A rainy day, a murky sky, will damp the spirits of the cheeriest nature; and a beautiful landscape, bathed in dazzling sunshine, will elate, in some degree, even the gloomiest croaker. His moods, influenced by such a simple agency as weather, express themselves in changing behavior even on that one day. What then of the protracted influences of our surroundings bearing upon us for months and years? What of the greatest of influences: good and bad example. And yet, you would maintain with an excess of self-assurance that the example of your bad friends will not at all harm you. *Would you give credence to a chimney-sweeper if he told you he crawled all day*

up and down chimneys without getting sooty? Do not be over-confident of yourself!

There is an old Latin saying which tells the whole truth: "*Fortis est qui se negat esse fortem.*" (He is the strong man who knows himself to be weak.)

THE ONLY PREVENTIVE: AVOID SIN.

SOME of your friends may perhaps mislead you and try to explain away your apprehensions by the mis-statement that nowadays reliable preventives against infection are available, and that if something untoward should happen, highly developed medical science and "sure remedies" would be at your disposal.

Although I believe, my young man, that you will not be held back from these sins by fear of disease, but rather by your honest moral convictions, yet it is worthwhile to know that medical science has found no infallible remedies, no radical cures for sexual diseases. The foolish self-assurance of your friend serves merely as mental dope to allay his own fears, as when someone passing at night through a dark forest breaks out into loud whistling to encourage himself.

Long, patient treatment with quicksilver, iodine, kali or salvarsan does improve the condition of patients suffering from such diseases, but certain cures are all too few. In many cases only the symptoms of the disease can be blotted out; the disease, itself, remains latent in the organism.

Medical authority has this to say on the matter in question: "In many cases there is a seeming cure, but months, often years, after a most careful

medical treatment, malevolent ailments crop out, indicating that the poison of syphilis, although not making its appearance, had been in latency in the body. By the speedy intervention of a doctor, these symptoms can again be obliterated, and syphilis again rendered latent, often, however, with just the same result as previously." (H. Paul, M.D., "Halte deine Jugend rein," Remain Chaste in Youth. Stuttgart, 29, 1.)

It was Dr. Gruber, of Munich, who solved the medical puzzle presented by the striking fact that the rate of mortality among men living in large cities between the age of twenty-six and sixty, was out of all proportion when compared with those living in the country, although there had been no unusual epidemics in large cities to account for the fact. After long years of investigation and research he found that a great majority of those dying in their prime of life were syphilitics in their youth. *They had been cured, but never regained their former vitality.* Instead they developed a susceptibility for other diseases, their health having been undermined both by their disease and by the narcotic and toxic drugs used in the cure.

A young man of a distinguished family, at the age of thirty-two, obtained a splendid position, and decided to marry. Shortly before the wedding day a dreadful malady attacked him. Its cause he couldn't fathom, and his doctor viewed with alarm the sudden and rapid collapse of his patient, an example of blooming health. The doctor at last told him that, from the symptoms, he had to conclude that years ago the young man must have been

guilty of some immoral straying. Hearing this, the young man burst into tears, and admitted that he had, at the age of sixteen, fallen into a sexual sin, *but only once*, and at no time since. The doctor then made out the case that the dreadful bacilli entered his body on that one occasion, embedded themselves, and began their devastating work after a period of sixteen years. The unfortunate man resigned his position,, broke his engagement, and left the country.

My young man, according to the unanimous opinion of science, there is but one infallible remedy against these diseases, and that is: absolute sexual continence—the absolute avoidance of sin.

AGAINST THE CURRENT.

IT is altogether likely that in these days you will often have to swim against the current for your convictions. But do not be loose-jointed. Oppose inflexibly the point of view, rather prevalent in present day society, that discerns nothing exceptional in the abasement or degradation of woman. To do away with this curse of our modern age, a moral revolution would be very desirable, and it is all too true that whoever would lead in such a revolution would require a greater courage than would be required to face the cannon-mouth. Yet, let us hope that the time of a healthier appreciation of general morality will some day come (God grant the day may be not far distant), in which there will be an end to the glaring contradictions we experience these days when the pettiest absconder or thief is held in deepest contempt, and ousted from society, but

doors are thrown open with applause and admiration to offenders and violators of woman's honor.

It is your duty to work, by your good example, for the advent of an age when people of virtue and good taste will again set the fashion for behavior, and frame the laws of moral conduct.

Be a real gentleman! A refined young man feels instinctively that to have to listen to piquant anecdotes, risque expressions, and equivocal stories would be a debasement of his gentlemanly breeding.

I whole-heartedly share the opinion of the great Swiss pedagogue of our age, Foerster, who writes: "Do not the sexual dissipations of many men in these days make their lives resemble those of gypsies who roam the country, and camp in the open as nomads within our ordered, civilized system of inter-social life? Surely the time will come when orderliness and purity in this respect, too, will just as self-evidently pertain to the definition of a correct man, as nowadays we exact his reliability in financial matters, and his integrity in public affairs."

IN THE BARRAGE OF DERISION.

COMPANIONS will, perhaps, deride your chaste behavior: your feeling ill at ease when they unload their stock of disgusting topics; your blushes over their immodest stories. *My young man, be proud of that! Be proud of being able to blush!* The sense of shame within us is not "childishness", not "bigotry", not a "pious fraud"—as they say—but an inestimable treasure, a weapon, the gift of nature with which our better self defends itself against our lower instincts. It aids the sensi-

tive soul of the youth to turn away like a compass needle of high precision, from all manner of moral impurity. It is a strong dike against the waves of unchastity surging against your soul's integrity. It is better to endure being called backward, sanctimonious and stupid, than to gain popularity with them at the expense of that integrity. We owe this pronouncement to St. Augustine: "Do not hate men because of their faults and sins, but on the other hand, do not like faults and sins for the sake of the people who are guilty of them."



Only a coward will shrink from undergoing an inconvenience incurred as a result of voicing his convictions. There were the boy martyrs, one of them the fourteen-year-old Vitus, who could smile when he was boiled in oil—for Christ. And the thirteen-year-old Pelagius who endured the cutting off of his limbs one by one in a torture lasting six hours—for Christ. If these tender children gladly suffered so much for love of their Maker, could you not suffer a little in the same cause?

It is not very difficult to understand your friends' mockeries and temptations. Have you ever seen a hog wallowing in the mire by the roadside that would not invite his fellows into the fine, soft, scented puddle? And you know with what a scornful grunt this same hog disposes of man for not lying down in the mire beside it. A frog, even if you set it on a throne, would jump back into the pond, for only there it feels itself at home. An old saying presents thus the implied truth contained in these examples: "There are people whose disapproval is the greatest praise we can win." The ass, too, has certainly a grudge against the rosebush for bearing roses and not thistles. Perhaps you have not heard what happened in a poor little village hidden among the mountains, all the inhabitants of which were suffering from goitre, because of lack of good water. One day tourists passed through the village, ordinary, honest-visaged people, but a gang of village children ran after them noisily laughing and shouting. "Look! Look! They are men—and have no goitres!"

In your difficulties you may gain strength from the conviction that whoever is willing to lose his character and estimable personality and belong to the vulgar herd, may slake his appetite for illicit sexual pleasures; but he who cares somewhat for his character and aims at developing an harmonic personality, must safeguard the purity of his mind and spirit until he enters the Sacrament of Marriage. *Brave is the conqueror of the lion, braver the conqueror of the world, and bravest of all is the self-conqueror!* Real manly character does not

grow of itself, one has to take pains in sculpturing it carefully, chipping off deformities, the rough surfaces of sin and frailties until it is chiselled into a well-formed, noble statue of manhood.

NO, IT IS NOT TRUE!

WHAT is not true? That which your friends use as a last resort to shake your firm belief in goodness when all else has been of no avail. It is not true, this base assertion, which, leaning on their own experiences, and the teachings of unconscientious medical men, they constantly din into your ears until they talk you deaf and dumb. "You are a hypocrite, a blockhead, if you think you can practise continence until the time of your marriage—it is nonsense, it is simply impossible! Youth has to have its fling! Youth is the golden season of life, it is to be enjoyed, and not allowed to pass by! Demanding absolute self-continence is now a philosophy behind the times! A well-developed body, bursting with vigor, is incapable of practising it. Sexual desire is like the heart beats, like breathing—just as natural! It comes of itself, you cannot help it! What Nature prompts you to do cannot be harmful, and must not be repressed! Why, then, struggle against it! The repression of this instinct will cause illness, and nervous disorders, if continued for years."

This reasoning is what I label a chain of falsehoods. It is not true that youth must have its riot as your friends would say. Does the Catholic Church not exact celibacy, self-continence, from its priests, yet they do not fall ill; why, their lifespan is proportionately greater than that of laymen. Is it

then impossible to practise self-continnence, not for life, but only until marriage? *No, it is not true that a well-developed, youthful constitution is incapable of self-continnence, and that sickness may result from its practise!*

What then is the truth on this subject?

DO NOT PLAY WITH FIRE.

IN the National Gallery of Berlin is a touching allegorical painting, before which a spectator cannot stand without being overwhelmed by sad thoughts. At the bottom of an awe-inspiring canyon we see the spuming waters of a wild mountain torrent tearing along; a bridge spans the abyss, but it is a bridge which looks like a long wedge, narrowing towards the centre. There it consists of but a mere plank, and on the bridge we see a young man with flushed face, and eyes aglow, riding on horseback.

He does not see the precipice, the narrow plank. He sees only the alluring siren of sensual pleasures beckoning to him from a distant rock. Only her he sees; towards her he rushes in mad blindness—and by his side there strides grinning Death with an hour-glass in his skeleton hand. In a few minutes the last grains of sand will have trickled through the narrow aperture; the youthful rider is already on the narrow plank . . . they are falling . . . horse and rider are hurtling down into the yawning abyss; down into the raging torrent.

Yes! One who has ventured out upon the steep path of immorality will find it mighty difficult to come to a stop and retrace his steps. The ancients have left us the story of a magnetic mountain that

stood somewhere in the middle of an ocean. When storms drove a ship near to it, the mountain pulled the ship towards its reefs with terrific force, and on those reefs it was shattered and sunk to the bottom of the sea. There are also stories of sirens who bewitched travellers, luring them to an island where they killed them mercilessly. That magnetic mountain, and those sirens of course, never existed. When, however, one starts out to play with the enticements of sensuality, he runs into dangers much greater than all the power of the fabled mountain or the sirens' enchanting songs—this is the truth!

It is true, also, that the will-structure of your noisy friends would not have collapsed like card-castles, at the slightest breath of temptation, if they had exercised more firmness at the outset in combating their low desires. As it is, in the beginning, these desires are not powerful, they approach with hesitancy. If your friends had resisted the first promptings of the devil it would not be necessary now for them to dress up their sins with plausible excuses. It is common knowledge that the fiercest animals can be tamed and trained. Why, then, could one not gain the mastery over his fiercest impulses?

It is not the instinct itself which is untameable; it is the instinct artificially excited which the weakened will cannot hold in check.

"But if Nature herself prompts us to gratify sexual instinct, why should it be repressed?" you ask. Professor Leo Liberman in his book, "To Students of Universities (and Institutions of Higher Learning)," answers this question in de-

tail: “. . . Now let us reply to those who, absolutely trusting the instincts instilled into us by Nature, contend that the gratifying of impulses implanted by Nature herself cannot be harmful. To this we answer that Nature has endowed man with various instincts, each serving a different purpose, as one single instinct would not suffice to serve all. One purpose of Nature is the preservation of the human race, therefore she provided us with the sexual instinct; another of her purposes is the raising of a healthy generation, the preservation of the health of the individual. Since, however, a gratification of the sexual impulse serving the propagation of the race might come into collision with the latter purpose, we are equipped with still another instinct, controlling the former, which we call the reasoning instinct.”

Instincts, for that matter, often prove to be deceptive. A patient recuperating from typhus is always hungry, so much so that he begs for a piece of bread. Alimentary instinct perhaps in no other case asserts itself as strongly as in this. Yet, what happens if, in pity, we yield to the pleadings of the sick person and supply the food which he craves? We endanger his life. His bowels, covered with scarcely healed wounds cannot stand the food, the wounds open up again, and when the unfortunate man is placed on the operating table, an examination reveals that he was killed by the food which his appetite craved—it practically punctured his bowels.

Who would not be prompted by instinct to have an ice-cold drink, or take an ice-cold bath when he is panting from the heat? The fateful consequences

of such a careless act are well known to most people. Everyone will acknowledge the correctness of our reasoning that instinct is often deceptive, and must needs be held in check.

Yes: all animals are actuated by their instincts, and instincts never mislead them. In the case of man, however, the controller of instinct is reason; and reason's voice must often contradict the demands of instinct.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUTH.

IT is true that youth should be made the most of; it is of vital importance that it be exploited; not, however, by letting all your instincts run riot, but by working with utmost earnestness on the formation of your future manly character. When youthful vigor within you is at high tension ready to burst, when your sparkling blood pulsates in fever heat, then, *fall to work and apply your energies to the conscientious performance of your duties.* Let your better self, your spirit, burst into bloom, flourish and take over the leading role; then your sensual, fleshly desires will subside into submission and obedience.

But, "You are a free agent!" they will say to you; "freedom" and "independence" are valued highly by youth. Yes, be free and independent, but be besides, judicious and sober, too. In the realm of ethics, as in that of nature, there are laws which do not brook violation, and will mete out direct punishment to the offender. If you were climbing on mountain heights, and came to a protective railing at the edge of a mountain path, you would hardly step over the rail exclaiming, "What

the heck is this obstruction standing in my way?" however free and independent you might feel. The laws of morality are just such barriers. In youth you may think them disagreeable nuisances; they are, however, really designed to protect your morality from mishaps. Seize the present hour then, enjoy your youth, but do not trample upon moral laws.

"Make the most of life! Let your fires burn!" You hear everywhere. Well! The Lord Jesus does not forbid this either. Neither does He teach that you must repress yourself, that you must not live a full life. Only one thing He demands: make the most of your life, but do not let yourself sink; do not go downwards, but upwards, ever upwards. Think of a rose-bush which "had its fling" in its time of growing, that is, the gardener allowed its wild sprouts to grow rank like weeds. Can it ever gather strength to produce blooms? Hardly ever! The fault lies with the gardener who did not trim its shoots *properly*. *Young man, bear in mind that you are the responsible gardener of your soul's rosebush.*

Oh, how many youths have sobbed out their laments of bleak despair to the stillness of the night: "Why did no one warn me in time of the terrible consequences of this sin? Why not of the first, only of the first?"

PURITY AND HEALTH.

SPECIAL mention must be made here of physicians who possess an elastic conscience, and who, motivated by a cheap ambition to create sensationalism, and have their names talked about,

put up the argument that chaste life is harmful to health. Their message is naturally welcome to many; it is given an especially warm reception by young men, to whom it offers excuses for their excesses. The existence of such medical men is undeniable. Their more serious-minded colleagues, however, label them "the quacks of the profession".

It is disconcerting to observe what a hold these distorted views of medical mischief-makers have gained on even young men of fairly well-balanced minds. The worst of it is that these teachings, being sensational, are broadly discussed in young men's circles and relayed from mouth to mouth, until they become widely disseminated and cause untold harm to sincere, but all too credulous young people. When such a gullible young person happens to be roused from his sleep by a headache, by somewhat louder heartbeats, or when he has a slight attack of dizziness, or when pimples appear on his face, he readily jumps to the conclusion: Here it is! It is true after all! My nerves are busted! My blood is too thick. . . ."

My young man, don't swallow all this scientific bluff. Even if you think it rather hard on you that you have to undergo some physical discomforts, and you will persist in tracing them to this learned charlatanry, consider whether you would be justified in tearing into shreds the noble texture of your soul just because of such trifles. Would anyone set fire to his well-built, well-kept house, just to get rid of some disagreeable flies which strayed into it?

No, it is absolutely untrue that chaste life in even the least degree be injurious to health. For,

show me a single, earnest medical work by an author who would be ready to face a serious challenge to his writings; show me a single medical man of good reputation who would undertake to prove regarding any sickness, or any disease, that it was caused by moral purity. Nowhere around the globe can such a person be found. While on the other hand, there are thousands of books treating of the terrible ravages caused by unchaste life.

Yes, there are pseudo-scientists in the medical world, and practising doctors, too, who unofficially approve of the transgression of self-continnence. The experts, however, the leading authorities, have entirely different statements to make.

MEDICAL SCIENCE SPEAKS.

AFTER a high school student had finished reading this book, his brother, a university student, disburdened himself of the following comments on it: "Well, it is, after all, not so serious! The case is nicely stated, but no doubt it is just a say-so of clericals. I admit it is true that one should not begin with these things before he is twenty years old, but once he is past twenty, well he can have a start."

Is that so? Is this just a say-so of priests?

If it does not weary you, read the pronouncements of some medical—not theological—scientists of world repute:

According to Krafft-Ebing, every normally developed man can live continently without the occurrence of any untoward change in his health.

Farel, the distinguished psychiatrist of Zurich, writes in his book, "The Sexual Problem": "Ordinarily sexual continence is not at all unobservable by the normal, average youth, who works diligently both mentally and physically, and refrains from the use of artificial stimulants, narcotics, especially alcoholic drinks. . . . His health will in no wise be impaired. . . . I have never come across a psychosis having its source in chaste life, but have diagnosed countless cases caused by sexual excesses and by syphilis. In the last analysis we have to conclude a chaste life is the fitting line of conduct for youth, not only from moral and esthetic considerations, but also from considerations of health."

Dr. Rossier writes: "I assert without reservation that chastity practised by young men cannot be injurious to their health. I should like to warn everyone, singly and individually, not to believe doctors advising sexual life before marriage; such counsel is erroneous and harmful."

Dr. Herbst, of Nuremberg: "Does not absolute continence cause just as much harm as does immorality?" "I most emphatically assert all such suppositions are false. Whoever thinks differently is in error, or is offering flimsy excuses for his own questionable actions. Complete continence is very possible, indeed it is to be practised not only physically, but also spiritually. Both our body and imagination should be preserved from the contrary."

The Second International Health Congress, held in 1902 in Brussels, unanimously carried the following resolutions: "Especially youth must be taught that not only has chastity no harmful effects on health, but that it is unqualifiedly commendable."

The Medical Faculty of the University of Christiania, Norway, gave out the following statement: "The allegation recently put forward by various individuals, and repeatedly given publication in newspapers and discussed at meetings, that chaste life and sexual continence are harmful to health, is, in our unanimous opinion, utterly false and in direct opposition to all our professional experience. We do not know of any disease or any impairment of health which could have had its source in absolutely pure and moral life." Signed: J. Nikolayson, E. Winge, Jokmann, J. Heiberg, J. Ijort, J. Wann, Mueller, E. Schoenberg, professors on the Medical Faculty in the University of Christiania.

Dr. Mantagezza: "I know for certain I have seen many stricken with paralysis, imbecility, extreme debility; I am sure I could enumerate at least twenty kinds of diseases originating in sexual excesses, but never as yet have I seen a disease which originated in chaste life."

The same Mantagezza, an Italian physiologist, states further: "The blessings of a moral conduct in life everyone, especially youth, can observe in his own person. His memory becomes keen and enduring, his thought vivid and fertile, his will strong, his character steeled into energy. No light-reflecting glass can show our surroundings in such exquisite colors as the prism of chastity. It radiates its rainbow colors on everything in the world, and bestows on us shadowless happiness."

Eulenberg, professor of psychiatry in the University of Berlin, declares: "I doubt that anyone—living a rational mode of life in other respects—

could fall ill, or become affected by nervous ailments merely because of sexual continence. This often-heard allegation I regard just as empty and nonsensical chatter."

In another of his works, the "*Neuropathia Sexualis Virorum*," he states: "The belief accepted with alacrity by the lay public and, alas, openly or tacitly endorsed by certain medical men, that sexual continence is positively harmful causes untold harm, chiefly in maturing youth; this belief literally drives them into a lawless sexual life. Against this, therefore, no protest can be too loud and too frequent."

Osterlen, in his *Manual of Hygiene*, gives this advice: "A young man, just as a girl, should live a life of continence until marriage. Its practice he can not find onerous if he recognize the truth that his future, and especially his happiness in marriage, depends on his mode of life in youth. We must, therefore, convince young people that for temporary continence there will be a rich reward of thriving health, great energy and manly self-consciousness."

Hersen, professor of medicine, Lausanne University, declares: "Doctors counselling young men to seek gratification outside marriage are guilty of unpardonable criminality. When young men complain of headaches, heartburn, let there be a careful medical examination in order to ascertain whether they drink excessive quantities of wine, beer, tea, coffee, use tobacco immoderately, lead a sedentary life, or whether there be any other cause of illness discernible; but such an unscrupulous counsel must not be given."

Max Gruber, the distinguished professor of medicine in Munich, adducing theoretical, practical and

statistical evidence, declares: "There is not even the shadow of evidence to prove that continence is injurious to health; whereas those doing hard mental or physical work feel at the very fullest exercise of their strength how much continence heightens their ambition and working ability. This was known to the athletes of ancient Greece and is known to the sportsmen of our day, to genial research workers, scientists and creative artists."

Dr. Paul, M.D., school physician, Karlsruhe: "The objection quite frequently raised by superficial people, intimating that the non-gratification of sexual instinct may engender various sickly conditions, is entirely without foundation. *No doctor has yet diagnosed a sickness that originated solely in the non-gratification of sexual instinct.* No conscientious physician has ever come forward with an opinion that a healthy man should satisfy sexual instinct in order to maintain his good health. That fluid secretion which is of periodical occurrence with continent men, the so-called pollution, regarded by the misinformed as a sickly symptom, is not sickly at all. It is a normal, natural excretion. Because of continence—I assert this with emphasis—no one has yet fallen sick." Further on: "The requisitions of religious morality are in perfect agreement with those of hygiene. Moreover, religious ethics are most signally borne out by the findings of hygiene in the very sphere of sexual life."

These are a few gleanings from works and statements of famous medical men. You are now armed with evidence and well prepared to enter a debate with your friends who would blab to you about the

dangers and impracticability of continence. Show them the enormous number of countless hospitals and asylums where the pitiable victims of immorality suffer, and then ask them to name you, if they can, one single hospital in which people sick from continent life are treated. *Let them show but one such hospital!* And then, let them remember: *Sin has its punishment and virtue its rewards!*

GOD AND NATURE.

INDEED, this could not be otherwise! We have seen that the Creator's holy laws exact absolute continence before marriage. I assert that if God had made only laws, with no provision that man's health be protected against injury in obeying His will, God would have come into contradiction with Himself—an utter impossibility. A remarkable linguistic fact is that in the ancient Teutonic language the words "whole", "wholesome", "hale", "hallowed", and "holy" spring from the same root, indicating that the blessings of health are bound up with godliness, with respect for God's laws. Why would nature punish immorality so terribly if morality were detrimental? Nature does never contradict itself! Neither is it accidental that there is not a trace of sexual diseases among animals—a remarkable testimony of nature—only humans endowed with free will possess this sad privilege.

We men endeavor to be superior and of more refined conduct than the animals. We do not feed but eat with table manners; we do not grunt but speak as refinedly as we can; we do not lick our fur but have a shave, a bath and use cosmetics; only

in one respect, in matters of sexual behavior, do we debase ourselves to a lower level than that of animals.

To man alone, of all His creatures, has God given that splendid auxiliary, the human hand. If our hands were not the amazingly perfect tools which they are, we could hardly surpass animals in any marked degree. With our hands we cook our food, put on our dress, write our letters, control means of transportation, make tools and handle them; in fact, most of our work and business we do by our hands. Our hand bespeaks the great confidence God has placed in us. How readily, therefore, ought man to use his hands as a means of raising himself above the animals, and disdain to use them for sinful acts, for self-pollution, which set him far below the level of animals.

God and nature punish those who rise against them. Is this not proven clear as daylight by the patent fact that the very creative power which—if put to use according to God's intentions—is intended as the source of new lives, becomes, because of sinful misuse, a destroyer of great multitudes of human lives. Indeed, nature protests, nature protects herself, her sacred laws. Hosts of devastating bacilli she sends against the rebel. This is nature's plain-spoken warning, her blunt way of persuasion that safety from these diseases is found only in complete continence or monogamous marriage.

Prudent youth will appreciate another word of warning. It is that those who avoid actual immorality only, yet give way to sensual desire, will sooner or later stoop to the act also. *For in these matters there is no stop once one has gone half the way!*

Soul and body are interacting and spiritual infection will spread over the body also.

In these matters there can be no compromise, no bargaining. We cannot set ourselves at ease by saying: "I shall go only so far in thought, where there is no danger yet of a sinful act, and not a step further." Vain self-deceit! When one is wilfully unclean in his thoughts, it amounts to the same as if he had actually committed the sin.

For this reason we must endeavor to keep our very thoughts clean. Sinful thoughts alone can set our entire organism into a fever of excitement: because the excitation of the brain automatically spreads over to the spinal marrow, and from there to the organs of passion. Excited passion, in its turn, clamors for the sinful act. I believe you when you say you cannot keep a ravaging fire in check; but was it not you yourself who lit the fire and fanned it into flames?

Read the following quotation from Professor Lieberman's work, "To University Students". It will throw further light upon the point in question: "Uninformed people are prone to believe that the gratification of awakened sexual instinct is necessary for the maintenance of health. Is this true? Continence has not any ill-effects worth mentioning, while incontinence, already due to the accompanying unsettlement of the nervous system, may lead to changes which will manifest themselves in disturbances of the nervous system and brain marrow in particular, and of the mental functions in general. The objection raised by some individuals that they know a number of people who, in spite of

their dissipations, are in good physical condition has no weight with me. Such examples do not prove anything. A few people may be found whose constitution is extraordinarily vigorous, who for a time seem to have the privilege of trampling on their health with impunity. Reasonably we can ask the question: Would the seemingly hale man not have been haler if he had planned his mode of life differently? Besides, we cannot rely much on seeming or alleged healthiness, for the reason that people generally are not in the habit of advertising their physical or mental deficiencies, but are rather wont to palliate, to cover up, to hide them.

“One who lives soberly, performs his duties conscientiously, refrains from association with easy-going people, despises immodest literature and frivolous theatricals as agencies engaged in the despicable business of excitation of human passion; one who does not neglect healthy activity and exercises—such a one will be little molested by an irritated instinct and will need but little exertion of will to overcome it.”

You knew a wild beast was slumbering within you; why then did you arouse it? You knew you were like tinder; why then did you play with fire? You knew it was dangerous to let off fireworks around a magazine filled with gunpowder. If one sins against purity in his thoughts, in conversations, in his readings, by gazing on immoral pictures and stage shows, and allows his disorderly thoughts to fatten themselves till they become his masters, it is no wonder that he cannot be continent in his acts either. But that chaste life is an impossibility for a young man who is pure in thought and in his

whole outlook on life, or that such a manner of life would in even the slightest way be detrimental to his health, I simply deny.



VI. CHAPTER

FIGHT BRAVELY ON AND BUILD ON IRON FAITH.

I REPEAT what I have said in the former chapter: My dear young man, were your nature ever so fiery, were the instinctive clamorings of your desires ever so forcible, setting upon you like panting wolves and with the ferociousness of tigers, they will not triumph over you *if you elect not to become their slave*, if your character continues firm and if the current of your life-stream, the will, be strong enough to assert itself against opposing currents.

All the sorrowful sights pictured in the previous chapters I have uncovered to you for one purpose only: that you may flee horror-stricken, flee *towards a brighter future*.

But you ask: "What then am I to do?"

You know, don't you, that if people wish to safeguard valuable things from robbers, they put them in a safe. The greater its value, the stronger the vault, the stronger the safe. *Your greatest treasure is the purity of your soul*. Build then an impenetrable wall around this treasure and instal every safety device to protect it from robbers, from the dark spirits of sin who covet your treasure.

Guard your thoughts, all your words, glances, actions, and exercise the greatest care to avoid the first false step, because the first moral fall is easily followed by a second and by a tenth also. You know now that your entire future may lie in the balance, and that the few years' struggle during

which you have to show perseverance is really no hardship, but an opportunity for self-expression. Yes, it is the time during which you are called upon to show whether by noble and skilful artistry you can mould yourself into a manly character, or that you can not.

PURE LIFE! PURE SOUL!

AS cleanliness is necessary for the life of the body—we need clean rooms, clean air, clean clothing, clean food—so is purity of life the pre-requisite of your soul's existence.

If a high building is to be cleaned, the steeple-jacks start at the top; and if you set out to purify your life, the start has to be made at your innermost ego, with your thoughts. The soul's purity is practically as sensitive as the Bologna Vial, a vessel of unannealed glass, which will fly into pieces when its surface is scratched by a hard body, or when a bit of it is broken off. You are either wholly pure—even in your thoughts—or you fall sooner or later. A middle course does not exist. With purity, as with honesty, we cannot chaffer. You cannot be middling honest, nor can you be middling pure. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5, 8.) "With all thy watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it." (Prov. 4, 23.)

St. Augustine, who in his youth, before his baptism, had very violent temptations and sinned grievously, comments upon the beginnings of sexual sin as follows: "When the first human couple had not yet been disobedient to God, they were masters of the sexual impulse, just as today we are masters of

our fingers. Man moves his fingers as he chooses and when he wills; they do not move without his will. In sexual matters, however, we are not the masters any more. Desires, sensations awake within us heedless of our will and do not leave however much we wish them to be gone. The first man was stupid enough not to obey his Lord in Paradise. The Lord, therefore, partly to give mankind a lesson, and partly to punish them, meted out the same to all men. As a consequence, one of his faculties, the sexual instinct, does not obey man, but against his reason and better judgment goes its own way!"

What follows therefore from the foregoing? That you must not wilfully summon up the malignant unclean spirits. Should they, however, appear of their own will, and when passion rises of itself, you must not let it overmaster you. The attempts of sin are feeble, all is just an incipient restlessness; you can still go out of its way, can divert your attention from it; if you do this, you are safe. If, however, you yield to the first immodest thoughts prowling after you, it will indicate that you are an easy prey, and they will come in greater numbers; then once control is lost, once you yield, you already have lost control over yourself, and there is no telling what may happen when you have ceased to be master of yourself.

WHERE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY BEGINS.

VERY likely you will be most harassed by roving thoughts, by the sudden onslaught of your desires, since over these we have least control. In order to save you unnecessary worries, let me assure you at the outset that an inclination to the

sin is in itself not yet a sin. We are responsible for our thoughts only from the moment we become *conscious* of them, not before!

In your maturing years, at any time, anywhere, at play, at study, at reading—you will often catch yourself with thoughts revolving around this sin, and your conscience will anxiously ask whether those thoughts do not injure your purity. Don't worry! You are not responsible for them until the time you have recognized them. We cannot forbid sparrows flying over our heads, but it would be our own fault if we let them make a nest on our head. In such moments of temptation, do not dally, *act quickly*, reach among your thoughts, seize and eject the unwelcome visitor.

How to go about it? Endeavor in whatever way you can to occupy your thoughts with other subjects; turn your mind on any other thought, and you will find the sinful ones depart almost imperceptibly as soon as your mind drifts to those other harmless associations. Take some interesting reading in your hands. Go out to play, to exercise. Busy yourself with tools, study, pray; just occupy yourself with something till the disorderly thoughts depart. There is no need to become upset or startled about them. Keep your composure. You will find these thoughts are like pestering flies which return with greater insolence if you just flail your arms about them. But if you knock them down with a well-directed flap, they will be done with. Do not engage in a direct fight with these thoughts—not even with the intention of battling them into submission—for the longer you deal with them, the stronger they grow. The wisest procedure is to

turn your back on them. They may knock, rap, rattle on your door, but simply pay no attention to them. Say to yourself with a feeling of superiority: "No, you will not get in here!" Don't stoop to concern yourself about them. Dogs, too, will inconvenience a stranger the longer, the more concern he shows about his trousers, but if he passes by them with superior indifference, they will pull in their tails and look for something else to bark at.

Do not lose heart if during a day or during an hour you have to grapple with these thoughts or desires even ten or more times. Sexual maturation within you takes place by the holy will of God; it is a natural concomitant of your physical development; so it is not a sin. But in order that thoughts may not eventually become sins, you have to refuse to pay attention to or become engrossed with them. Frequent temptation is not a sign of guilt or badness, rather is it indicative of a moral soundness; in fact it is the fortress which will not submit which has to stand the longest siege by the enemy. A soldier who is attacked by the enemy has nothing to be ashamed of, but one who cowardly surrenders has. Be comforted by the knowledge that even if you get entangled for a while among these thoughts, everything depends on your will, whether it yields meekly or struggles bravely on. "*Non nocet sensus, si deest consensus.*" (St. Bernard.) (*While you struggle on, there is no sin.*) Sin begins where will has given up the struggle. You are not responsible for what happens outside your will or consciousness.

Therefore, disregard and dismiss indecent, unsavory thoughts and desires from your mind when-

ever they approach you, and force your mind to think of other things. Why? Are we here treating of loathsome, despicable matter? Far from it! We are here treating of the sublimely sacred concepts of the Creator, and these which you can protect from desecration and defiling just by controlling your mind in this manner.

CONSENT AND NON-CONSENT TO SIN.

I DRAW your attention especially to a natural process which may cause needless disquietude to conscientious but uninformed boys. In time, at the age of seventeen, eighteen, you will reach a stage of bodily development when the organism—usually during sleep—discharges a certain fluid, this being accompanied by sensual excitement. Let this not perturb you! It is not illness—unless it occurs too frequently, several times weekly—neither is it sin, merely a sign of sexual maturation in its process. Nor does its frequent occurrence necessarily indicate ill-health; it may be caused by a temporary weakness of the nerves, having undergone perhaps a protracted strain during examination time, or been subjected to some other strain; an extraordinary event may have put them under high tension. This fluid discharge takes place independently of your will, the same as breathing or pulsation; it is a stock-taking operation of the organism; it discards that for which it has no use, what is superfluous.

But is the sensual excitement attending it a sin? Neither it nor the incident itself is sin. Be careful, however; it may become such, if in a conscious state.

you let your mind dwell upon it lustfully, or if you yourself in any way *wilfully bring it about*. So, then, if on such an occasion you awake from sleep, pray, turn your thought to some other subject till you again fall asleep.

During your growing years it may also happen that your sexual organ may be in a state of excitement during the day also, and from no special cause whatever. If it occur of itself, ignore it; it is just a symptom of your maturation; but see to it that tight and warm underwear, the pressure of your trousers, too much sitting, unnecessary touches, or any other movements do not produce that excitement.

I repeat, everything depends on the will, on your consent. As you know, there is in man a so-called physical volition, the lower volition, which will not instantly and always obey his spiritual volition. For example, you are visiting a picture gallery and your eyes accidentally turn upon a painting of sensual appeal—sensual perhaps only to you. The painting itself may really be representing high-principled art, yet at your susceptible, easily excitable age physical volition, awakening in that moment creates excitement and stirs up vagrant, immodest fancies about the painting. As this is not yet a fully conscious activity of the mind, you are not responsible for it. Conscience, becoming aware of the situation, will speak up immediately, bidding you to take your eyes off the picture and to look at others. If you do so, your spiritual volition has asserted itself as it should and you have not sinned. Sin always requires a willingness and consent to sin.

One thing is important: do not ever consciously tolerate indecent thoughts in your mind. In other designs or enterprises success can be achieved best if you apply the mind to them long enough; but here the essential condition of success is to think about these things as seldom as possible. When you take a walk in the garden and an ugly, green caterpillar falls on your hand, you will not deliberate at length as to what you should do about it, but will brush it off, won't you, before it besmears you. Or if a spark fell on your coat, you would not leisurely watch it burning a big hole in the coat, but would extinguish it at once. Just so must you oust unclean thoughts from your head and stifle them at once.

THE BACILLI OF IMMORALITY.

B EING master of the situation at home, possessing control of your own thoughts and imagination, is a long step forward. It means you have solved your domestic problems, have ceased to be a stumbling block to your own self, and will be better able to stand your ground against outside evil influences. These outside influences will approach you and essay to gain entrance into your mind through your imagination. Imagination is the marvellous ability of the mind to take pictures of everything we see and experience, to combine and shuffle them and recast them in countless variations, leaving it to the reason and intellect to reach into this maze of mental pictures and reduce them to order. Imagination, and through it, your mind, is easily infected by the bacilli of immorality spread and communicated by licentious and unprincipled

people, not only in a coarse and glaring form, but also in the subtler disguises of books, movies, amusements, etc. Against these bacilli, this epidemic of immorality, our main defence must be the same as that employed against the deadliest smallpox or cholera—cleanliness. Where cholera breaks out, posters appear immediately everywhere warning the populace to exercise the greatest care about personal cleanliness, to use disinfectants, and be careful in the selection and handling of food. In the same manner, in the soul of every youth I should like to hang up posters in flaming letters, the rules of moral purity: "Young man, beware of the bacilli which spread immorality!" They are present everywhere. An invading army can be held up by trenches and arms; swirling floods can be controlled by throwing up dikes against them; but the epidemic of immorality is stronger than armies and floods—the only defence against them is purity.

"Yes, I must take care. But don't you realize what a topsy-turvy world we live in nowadays?"—not a few sincere young people may remark. "How can I take care when I am surrounded by a sea of temptations and every step only plunges me into new difficulties?"

Deeply moved, I feel that the justness of this terrible indictment also characterizes similar complaints of many high-minded young men against the sinful life of our days. I feel, my dear young man, that your accusations are just. Nevertheless, allow me to say I cannot leave off demanding that you must remain pure! Amongst the countless opportunities for sinning? Yes!

"But when there is so much indecency shown in movies, so much frivolity displayed on the stage!" Well, who forces you to attend such performances?

"But when so many naked displays glare at me from show windows and advertisements!" Well, who forces you to look at them?

"But when there are such loads of smutty wise-cracks dished up in vaudeville, over the radio!" Well, who forces you to go there to listen to them?

"But when my classmates, my friends, talk to me of all this filth!" Well, who forces you to take part in such discussions, to associate with them?

Many a good-hearted youth complained to me: "Why is this awakening impulse so troublesome? Why are so many temptations disturbing me in youth? Why does this desire not waken in us later? Why so early, and with such force, at a time when as yet I can't even think of marriage?" And who would say his complaints are not reasonable and well-founded? True enough, sexual instinct in our age awakens earlier than if it conformed to natural growth, to the order of development. It is because modern ways of life have drifted far away from natural life. Picture shows, exciting readings, frequenting of dance halls, much sitting indoors and little physical exertion, spicy, starchy food, rouse these desires in the softened and pampered body of a city-bred youth much earlier and stronger than in a country lad who does a good measure of physical work and lives a simpler and more natural life. It is a fact that the student doing mental work has much more temptation of this nature than the young

man occupied in manual labor. This would again indicate that young people living in cities must more and more avoid all occasions which tend to excite their nervous system.

WHAT YOU READ.

IN this age the printed word is the most powerful creator and moulder of public opinion, of current thought; and no wonder; for almost all mental food we consume is conveyed to us in books, newspapers, magazines, etc., and these enter practically every home, reach every individual, in a ceaseless flow.

While reading is of immense value and importance in educating, entertaining, and informing the human mind, it is also a great power for evil when reading matter issues from the lower strata of informative and entertaining enterprises. In such cases printed pages are the hotbeds and carriers of the deadliest bacilli of immorality. The most pernicious diseases may enter your mind and soul through your eyes if you neglect to guard them and let them be immersed in festering literary sewage.

Select your reading matter with the utmost care. I am in no way endeavoring to dissuade you from extensive reading; on the contrary, I do recommend it, for it is the best means of widening your culture. Yet, with equal emphasis do I caution you to allow on your shelves no form of literature which mocks at morality, and teaches lax moral attitudes, licentiousness, either openly or equivocally. In point

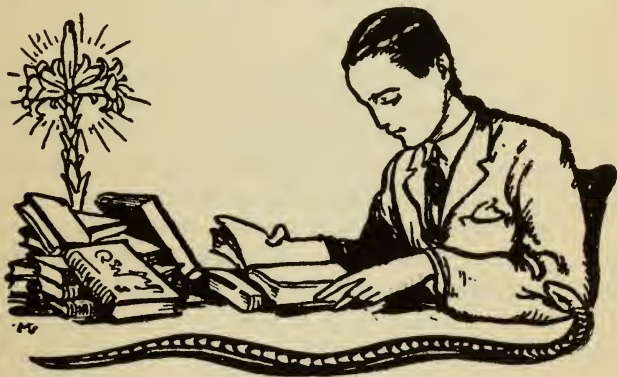
of style such writings are usually the scum of literature, and for this reason alone time should not be wasted on them. No culture springs up in the wake of such literature—only graveyards, where the hopes of parents mould under the sod—early deaths from mental poisoning.

Unfortunately, among the masters of style and story-telling we meet with some who think nothing of steeping their talented, God-given pens in moral corruption, and who indecorously analyze, teach, disseminate, the “beauties”, “joys” and “delectability” of immoral life. These authors are the more dangerous the greater the power of their pen. “Much talent but little character,” might well serve as a motto to their works; they may think themselves demigods when they are just hogs. Beware, lest death enter your soul through such “artistic works”. However artistic the workmanship of a revolver may be, you would not use it to send a bullet into your brain, or would you? Why then would you delve into dumps of literature even though they be sprinkled with gold dust when you can—thank God—mine for real diamonds in the noble literature of your country—of the world?

We must in sadness face the fact that our modern literature is chiefly devoted to the glorification of misconduct in love and the aberrations of sexual life. If these novelists and poets were right, we should have to take it that man has little to be proud of in his sublime thoughts and ideal aspirations, his pride being solely in his physical instincts, his sexual desires, in regard to which he is exactly on a level with animals.

YOUR BOOKS.

HERE I do not enter into detailed discussion of penny dreadfuls, that cheaper sort of detective stories and stories of adventure. Reading these also is a waste of time. They excite the imagination and fill the mind with useless romanticism. It is sheer stupidity to turn your interest on such trash when there are so many good books awaiting to be read and for reading of which you will never have time enough. Much more, however, do I mean to deal with that vulgar, smutty



kind of dime novel, anecdote collections and books which your evil-inclined friends are in the habit of reading stealthily in secluded places with thumping heart, pulsating blood, excited imagination. Such readings are just as injurious to the nervous system, even more so than alcohol, nicotine and caffeine. I trust that with righteous indignation you will always spurn offers of this kind of literature from a friend.

Some of the boys evince every unwarranted method of reasoning on this practice. They will

read indiscriminately, they say, every book they lay their hands on, the kind, too, which they know will be offensive to their religious feelings and moral sense. "After all, I want to know what has been set forth by those in the opposing camps! *That won't do me any harm.*" I believe the lad when he asserts that he is not reading it with a bad intention—just from curiosity—but what I cannot believe is that it will do him no harm. Neither would you believe that I could be long alive if I went to a drugstore and sampled all the poisons in stock there, not with a "bad intention" to come to harm, "just to find out their effects".

It is hard to understand some people: if they find a hair in their soup, they cannot go on with the dish. If there is bad air in the room, they cannot stand it; yet they will fall to and swallow, without protest, the filthiest and most nauseating books.

In the selection of your reading matter be guided by a sensitive conscience. Whatever book you take into your hand, though its literary merit were extolled to the skies, *if in it you come to a passage scandalizing your sense of purity in even the slightest degree, muster up enough will power to turn over these passages unread; and if such passages occur frequently, put the book away, stop reading it altogether.* You will never have occasion to regret having followed this rule, and having adopted the words of the poet for your slogan:

Give me, My God, a good heart and a brain!
But if Thou wouldst impart
One only of these gifts of heavenly grace,
Deny me intellect, and in its place
Give me a stainless heart.

—Francis Versegghy.

Should you already be attending high school and have grown beyond adventure stories, you will be well advised to read, besides English classics, some serious character building books, teaching the art of self mastery and the developing of moral strength. These books, however, are not just to be skimmed over; read them chapter by chapter, and *ponder, reflect over them*. Naturally, only the best books are good enough for this purpose. Such are the New Testament, chiefly the gospels; "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas A'Kempis; "Philothea," by St. Francis de Sales.

These books, imbued as they are with solid and profound ideas, by no means offer light reading matter. However, if you will devote but ten or fifteen minutes daily to the perusal of one or another of them, your gain will be an increased vitality and refreshed energy for attending to your other daily occupations.

NEWSPAPERS.

THERE is scarcely a city-dweller these days to whom the reading of a daily newspaper is not a habit. No wonder, for newspapers are cheap and obtainable at every corner. The capacity of the huge rotary presses has grown to the towering point where today they turn out fifty thousand or more copies of papers per hour. As a result, perhaps you are also steadily interested in daily events. It would not be at all detrimental to the development of your mind if you were not a newspaper reader at middle school age. There will be plenty of time for it later on.

However, I do not object. Read if you like, but be on your guard against newspapers, too, for many are not without reproach. Unfortunately, the dominant note in the news business today is dividends, not principles. The tendency is to cater to every taste and interest. Hence the all too great space given to the recording of crime and vice, to sensationalism, to a photographic and microscopic detail in reporting adulteries, fornications, scandal; hence so much idle and sometimes vulgar gossip, so much impudent prying into the privacy of domestic life.

My dear young man, you must know your duty with regard to newspapers, too. There are a number of trustworthy, first-class dailies and periodicals available. If, however, you come to read literature of different persuasion, keep a sharp lookout and listen to your conscience. For what is the use if you flee from a snake when it has already bitten you?

ART.

BE no less watchful in looking at pictures and representations of art. Pictures, statues or other representations are worth seeing only if they engender noble thoughts in your mind. When your soul, however, is given the least offence by any—be it even the world-famous Venus de Milo, do your duty, turn your eyes elsewhere. What, then, shall I say about picture cards, clippings from magazines, which some schoolboys circulate amongst themselves on the plea of “studying the fine arts”. These are simply handbills and advertisements of sin stealthily distributed by tools of the devil.

The classic artists of ancient and medieval times often represented naked human bodies. Their works, however, are not brazen exposures of nudity, not irritants of sensuality—as is so much of the nudism of our day. For from them emanates the might of the spirit, giving man mastery over the flesh. Those masters aimed at linking the natural with the supernatural, at representing in the naked body a glorified body also; their sensualism is tempered by the strikingly grand and noble facial expressions; their bodies bear the face of the divinity.

Maybe these classic statues also will disturb the peace of your sensitive mind; if so, do not look at them. It is, however, quite certain that the primary object of a great many modern artists in representations of the naked body is to irritate the senses. These painters employ nakedness as a cloak to cover up their lack of talent and their greed for profit. They babble about “fine art”, “abstract esthetic contemplation”, “noble enjoyment of art”, yet their “works”, their mass nudism, has no higher aim than the whipping up of man’s animal instincts.

Some people may object: “The human body, as all other things, has been created by God; why then is there any indecency in looking at it!” Yes, the human body is God’s creation! It is, moreover, an amazing masterpiece! Consequently there is nothing infamous or contemptible about it. *The fault does not lie in the human body, but in our moral weakness.* What comes from without is not evil; evil springs from the inside, from the wicked thoughts and desires of men. This circumstance has to be taken into account by the artist as well as

by everyone else. Once an artist forgets this maxim and presents the body for its own sake, he ceases to be an interpreter of true art; for a characteristic of true art is the absence of factors tending to disturb its enjoyment. Serenity of soul is an absolutely necessary requisition in the contemplation of art; but the entrance of sinful excitement into the soul disrupts and disturbs enjoyment.

The laws of ethics as well of esthetics demand that a naked body be used only in presentations of spiritual phenomena; never for its own sake. One is seized with shame, realizing that pagan Greek and Roman sculptors were motivated by an immeasurably greater perception and appreciation of these laws than the present day Christian artists. Their sculpturings, as a rule, are permeated by so much spirituality and tact that the spectator is not offended.

In determining what pictures, sculptures one may or may not examine, we are directed by two considerations: (1) What was the avowed purpose of the artist in the presentation of the naked body; (2) What is your nature, your reaction? If the artist's aim be evidently the excitation of the senses, turn your back on his work. If, however, he made use of the unclothed body to give much more emphasis to great spiritual emotions and experiences, you may look at it, provided your nature is not too sensitive and excitable. There are young men who by self-control and self-education have developed in themselves a degree of spiritual maturity, and possess ample calmness and composedness to protect them from the harmful influences of art. Yet there are

those too who, lacking in these qualities of the mind, cannot even look at masterpieces of art without experiencing lustful thoughts.

The main rule therefore is: *look at nothing which is too much for your strength, which stirs up sinful thoughts in your mind.* And don't forget one thing; there are pictures and statues too strong, too overwhelming for all decent people!

PLAYHOUSES, CINEMAS.

I HAVE also to warn you of the dangers of playhouses and cinemas. The contemporary theatre critique in newspapers, the greater part of which is dearly bought by authors and theatre managers, extols every play to the skies, so that it is almost impossible to know beforehand whether for your good money they won't stuff your soul for hours with hand picked immoralities.

World-famous, unbiassed art critics declare that the present day playhouse has drifted very far from real art.

This, perhaps you too have already found out. In fact, we need only look around: where is the playhouse in which the plays of talented authors of dramatic literature are presented? The famous classical plays? Nowhere, or if at all, very seldom.

On the other hand, the modern plays, choke-full of indecencies, marital infidelities, girl-seducings, clandestine love-affairs, are being presented day after day. The crowds are better pleased with them these times; such plays bring in greater receipts. We admit. But if so, nobody should *invoke the sacred name of culture in attempting to defend such theatres.*

Really, if we are to believe modern play and scenario writers, we shall have to accept the shocking notion that the most sublime, the very highest aim which can be set before man is the sexual life, the gratification of his lower instincts. But if this is so, then man is entirely on the same level with animals.

Seldom now can a play be found without a love plot, or perhaps, without a sinful love affair. In these the audience gets the impression that the paramount purpose of life is love. What? This is deception, isn't it? Surely love is limited to a certain number of years, and during that time too, it is *only one* of those weighty things people have to concern themselves with.

Yes, there was a time when the theatre was truly an instrument of culture, where people went in order to raise themselves above their passions. Now, however, it is merely a place for amusement, where there is just so much more fire laid under the inflammable human passions. Why the very posters of numberless plays, the titles of numberless films are the proclaimers of demoralization.

The elder Cato's argument for not permitting a permanent theatre was its habituating people to indolence. And Seneca, profiting by his experiences, writes: "There is nothing more injurious to morality than sitting in theatres. There vices under the cloak of pleasure sneak into us so much more easily. When I leave the theatre, I am greedier, vainer, more sensual and crueler." It is indeed regrettable that in regard to our theatricals we have no justification for modifying that rigorous outlook of the pagans.

Not for the world would I infer from this that contemporary dramatic literature produces nothing of outstanding excellence, or that there are no masterpieces among film productions.

The trouble is just that through the lack of reliable literary criticism, reputable productions of real literary merit are lost amid theatre plays and books which are boosted by a thousand blaring trumpets, glaring posters, and bombastic write-ups in the business mart of our age. Because of the lack of earnest critique we are approaching a situation similar to a garden once filled with flowers and blossoms, but now neglected by its owner, among the few roses left, weeds, hemlock, thistles are growing rank, and the swine unmolested root up the remaining flower beds.

Therefore, if you be a movie or theatre-goer and read the "modern" literature, and the unceasing praise of modern culture catches your ear, *do not for a moment forget that the enyoking of man's noble ideals in the thralldom of sensuality—by whatever artistic means it be done—is not culture, is not art, but a wicked outrage upon the moral aspirations of humanity.*

Such writers just camouflage their indecencies with the slogan of art, indecencies which they would not yet dare to offer for sale openly. Do not be afraid of being backward in art, in culture, because you are strict in the selection of theatre plays and films you decide to see or of the books you are going to read! Many of them in their very titles betray the real truth that filth alone is being dumped on you. I am sure you will have nothing to do with this kind of commodity.

But what are you to do if accidentally and in good faith you should stray into such a performance? Either you can leave the place, or look elsewhere until the improper scene is terminated or the film episode is unreeled. You will protect yourself from many unnecessary temptations if at such times you can overcome your awakening curiosity. Make it your principle that *it is better to be unnecessarily timid than undesirably bold.*

DANCING.

AFTER the movies and playhouses a few words about dancing will be in order. I fancy you look rather blank now, thinking that I am surely going to forbid it.

Now, just wait and see!

One thing is certain—that interminable dance craze which is raging in present day social life may be suited to imbeciles, but not to earnest, sober-minded people. There was much to commend in the rigorous outlook of ancient Romans, which classed dancing with activities ill becoming free citizens. Indeed, many young people affected with chronic dance craze might benefit from reading old Cicero's words in his defence of Murena, a consul of Rome who was prosecuted on a charge of having danced: "Such a charge," said Cicero, "should not be lightly brought against a consul of Rome. What criminality has he been guilty of heretofore that we could believe him capable of such misconduct? Surely nobody dances unless he be drunk or demented!" Pro. L. Murena 6, 13.

Although dancing yourself off your legs in an overheated, dusty dance hall cannot be called a healthy sort of amusement, yet—do not be afraid—I am more lenient than Cicero. I am not going to set myself entirely against dancing. In its own place and time it may be a seemly amusement for young men of character too.

You may ask in astonishment: "How can dancing and character be spoken of in the same breath?" Yet, in a dance true worth of character as well as repellent lewdness becomes clearly revealed. Perhaps nowhere as clearly as here. Dancing is a most analytic test of manly character, every movement, glance and word revealing what is one's inner worth. The moral weakling sees in dancing another opportunity for unmuzzling his lower instincts, his licentiousness. A young man of character, however, even here will not forget for a moment that now he is the "knight" of his girl-partner. And it is in his capacity of knight that he protects his "lady" not only from offences from others but, first and chiefest, *from the least unchivalrous thought or desire of his own impulsive nature.*

A noble-minded young man, who protects his dance partner not only from a cold draught but also from an excessive warmth of his own temperament; who watches not only his dance steps but also the run and drift of his conversation, need not be afraid of a slip and sprawl on the slippery floor, nor that the day will end in a moral fall for him. Weaklings, on the other hand, while taking the utmost care to avoid a slip on the polished floor, forget all the while that moral slips may be quite possible occurrences and indeed happen quite frequently.

I am of the firm opinion that *the conduct shown by young men in a dance is one of the best tests of the firmness of their character and of gentlemanly qualities.*

To sum up, dancing is always a potential danger to the youthful soul. This is aptly illustrated by the saying: "The devil gladly fiddles to a dance." Therefore, never go to a dance without first earnestly resolving that you will take good care of yourself. If you give due weight to the above considerations you may attend dance parties in the circle of respectable people.

Meanwhile I have had a protest from a high-school student who had read the first edition of this book. His letter insists that I absolutely condemn present-day dancing because modern dancing is nothing but a wilful whipping-up of sexual instincts. Needless to say, I approve only such dances as are proper. For there are dances that must uncompromisingly be boycotted and left to monkeys, goats, and people who have long since passed over the boundaries of decent behaviour.

BE CHIVALROUS.

THE great men of history are no doubt a rich source of inspiration to you; Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Wellington and others. Yet there is no greater hero, no greater victor on earth than he who can subject his instinctive desires of the lower order to the better judgment of his superior spiritual nature; while, on the other hand, the most humiliating thralldom for a man ordained for spiritual rule is to wear the

chains of his own blind passions. Try to remember this in grave moments when your instincts challenge you to battle.

Be ever ready to show the spirit of chivalry to womanhood, not only in appearance, but as a real indwelling feeling. As Schiller expressed it in his famous poem, "The Song of the Bell":

Fair as a vision from the sky
The maiden stands before his eye.

Here, however, I do not mean that sugary affect-
edness that endless, senseless, artificial adulation
which fops of our day call chivalrous manners; no,
but I think of real knights of the middle ages, who
with a sword in their hand were always ready to
espouse the cause of the weak and protect the honor
of womanhood. The real knight is he who first of
all protects a woman from his own disorderly desires
and mischievous dalliances. A knight is he who
even in the unfortunate fallen recognizes the sex of
his mother and sister, and would as quickly condemn
improper suggestions to any of these unfortunate
women as he would not be slow in settling with one
who would approach his mother or sister with sim-
ilar intentions.

AMONG WOMEN.

IF such be your attitude toward womanhood, it
will manifest itself whenever you happen to be
in their society. At your age, do not intention-
ally seek their company. However, if you should
happen to be with them, you must be neither em-
barrassed nor diffident. Your noble sentiments will

be your surety of finding the most appropriate tone and attitude, a surety that you will never, in word or act, be forgetful of your position as a gentleman; that you will never allow yourself liberties towards a girl which you would not countenance if taken by other young men towards your sister.

Make it one of your rules not to let yourself be pampered and molly-coddled by your women relatives. Such ceaseless feminine fondling, caressing, soft endearments have a tendency to render manly character effeminate. Endless sentimentalism, kissing, caressing, simpering is tolerable among women, but in man's veins solid blood must course, not soft drink and cider. Of the same kin is day-dreaming, that wholesale time wasting and deceptive distorting of life. Some young people in their growing years often for weeks enwrap themselves in romanticism, weave gigantic plans for the future, unaware that their sentimentalism is changing and degenerating into sensualism.

I believe you will now readily understand why I wish that boys should not frequent the company of the other sex, cultivate girl friendships, until they earnestly think of marriage. For they will usually grow effeminate, their character when developing in this way will show a lack of manly features, and denaturalize into a cake-eating, foppish, conceited puppyism, which is neither man nor woman. Besides, love, the tender passion, is not a plaything for juveniles, neither are years of youth the time for frivolous adventure, foolhardy love-making. Love has its time when marriage can be contemplated.

YOUR FUTURE BETROTHED.

IT will save you from many a stumble if at a maturer age you sometimes turn your thoughts to the pure-hearted girl to whom one day, according to God's designs, you will swear eternal fidelity—to her who is living her innocent girlhood somewhere afar, protecting herself from spot and blame, and waiting for her future knight.

Are you what she imagines you to be?

Are you pure-hearted and worthy of this girl?

Are you the knight of her dreams?

Hold the image of your future bride before your eyes; that as your good angel she may afford protection from temptations and strength to subdue them.

Keep all your love, all your thoughts, all your interests for her, for the fervid and undying affection which will join you together until the grave. From the purity, from the untarnished nobleness now inspiring your life will the most beautiful flowers of love spring up to bloom in and engadden your family life.

Purity of body and spotlessness of soul are the most precious wedding gifts young men and women can present to each other, *and a true man seeks to win only one woman—his future wedded wife.*

You know your married life cannot give real happiness if your life has not been pure and chaste before marriage. From this, however, it follows, does it not, that associating and courtship can be respectable, permissible and decent only if they take place in their due time and have marriage as their purpose. Any other sort of lovemaking is but frivolous play and unprincipled licentiousness.

BE PARTICULAR ABOUT PERSONAL CLEANLINESS.

TIDINESS in outward appearance and cleanly habits are of such importance in daily life that I think a few practical hints in this regard will be useful to the younger boys.

Orderliness in appearance tends to promote and sustain orderliness in the soul also. I do not mean to imply that every fashionably dressed youth's soul is consequently in the best order. Unfortunately that is not the case. Yet it is a fact that the soul in some manner bears upon the exterior, and the uncombed, unkempt, unwashed youth with dirt accumulating under his fingernails, and with the menu of yesterday's dinner on his clothing is not a graceful sight, and is more likely to harbor a disposition for disorderly thoughts, smutty talk, and mischief-doing. Exterior cleanliness on the contrary is very often an indicator of conditions within; it intensifies our endeavor after everything that is clean and puts us on our guard against everything that may soil our soul.

Wash yourself several times a day, in the morning stripping to the waist; take a bath as often as possible, at least twice weekly. Let order prevail in your clothes-closet and in your room. A cap flung in a corner of the room in the evening may demand considerable time to remember the exact corner in the morning. Clothing folded neatly in the evening will not look in the morning like something the cat dragged in. The clothes-brush, hair-brush and shoe-brush are things which should be made use of every day, not once in a blue moon.

“DIE AND RISE.”

I DO not wish to play deception; therefore I tell you frankly that a perfect training of the will to the point that it takes orders from the mind like a docile lamb is very difficult. You should therefore be willing to reach after every means that may aid in attaining this purpose. One of the most efficacious aids in this field is self-denial.

Self-denial?—ugh!—exclaims many a youth hearing this word. Why, that savors of the middle ages! Today we live in the age of “life assertion” and can talk only of an “intensification”, “a greater vitalization of life”. Today people want to “enjoy life” as fully as possible, not curtail it, subtract from it or deny it.

Now, just let us reflect a little. What is self-denial? It is a striving for, a means of acquiring will power, of which we absolutely stand in need if we wish to attain a nobility of character. Self-denial is a clamp on our disorderly and unpermitted bodily desires and inclinations. Therefore, remember it well—self-denial does not mean the subjugation of our nature, nor the use of force against our natural faculties, but only against our *inordinate, excessive desires* which endanger our existence.

All of us have abundant faults; all of us stand in need of self-denial. Self-denial gives us self-control; and lost indeed is the young man in whom, with self-control lacking, the passions gain the upper hand. Self-denial enables us to be tolerant, patient with ourselves and our fellow beings; it is evident that society could not function if this were lacking. Without self-denial great and sublime ideals, personality,

loftiness of character, culture, civilization, progress could not be attained.

Indeed, all of this can be accomplished by force only, by resorting to "violence" against our wicked propensities. This violence, called self-denial, is not the aim itself; it is just a means, a concomitant, a transitional period on the way to victory toward the joy, the self-respect which will reward a man for his self-disciplining labors in youth.

On the other hand, just those who advocate the "free gratification of the senses" and "a thorough exploitation of life" and cowardly yield to every one of their disorderly impulses, just those will lose their susceptibility for real joys and become underminers not only of their own will-power, character and health, but also of human culture in general.

"We must intensify life!" That is quite all right. But that intensification should not consist in emboldening our clamorous instincts, but rather in holding them in check with a firm grasp. As water under high pressure gains an immense expanding force and lifts tons of weight like feathers in the hydraulic press, so does the pressure of self-denial lift a man up, who by reason of his fallen nature gravitates downwards.

This is the meaning of Goethe's famous words: "Die and Rise".

SPIRITUAL RICKETS.

HAVE you seen children with abnormally bulky heads, crooked spines, their members encased in steel supports, dragging themselves along like little Jobs, patiently and silently bearing their sorrows. People turn after them and say: "Poor child, it has the rickets."

Alas, if we had but Aladdin's lamp to look into men's souls, how we would exclaim step by step: "Poor rickety souls."

What do rickety souls look like?

These are souls whom a thousand comforts of civilization as well as indolence rooted in their nature have made soft, jellylike; souls who abhor any exertion, whose backs shiver at the mention of self-control, self-denial. They may grow up strong and well, may educate their minds with care; their will, however,—which they shall need at every step in life—remains frail, stunted, pithless and useless.

Poor rickety souls! Young man, do you want to remain like them?

Remain? you ask—why, am I such now?

Yes, you are. Physical rickets, thank God, is a comparatively rare disease among children; spiritual rickets, however, is born with us, *and everyone must cure himself, discipline himself out of it.*

Have you a little four-five-year-old brother? Just observe his behavior, how much he is still under the rule of material life. When at supper your cake is just an inch longer than his, how he cries, blubbers! And how he cannot yet resist any desire, cannot deny himself! His will is still affected with rickets.

You see: though a strong will is slumbering within every one of us, it is a faculty which we have to develop by conscious, steadfast, daily training. Begin this training of your will today! The sooner you begin the better. When you are grown up, your will too will have grown and hardened to unbendingness, like a full grown tree. There is scarcely a boy in his normal state who *wants* to fall into sin.

Yet many fall. Why? Because their will is *weak*. Very important in its consequences is the advice I give below about training your will and inuring your body to discipline.

STRENGTHEN YOUR WILL.

WE do not have to exert ourselves to commit sins, we fall into them; there is no upright life, however, without a strong will, without much exertion on our part.

The easy-going and those who are lenient with the desires and demands of their instincts fall the easiest on the moral field. To this fact I want to call your special attention.

You know from experience how often we have to choose, decide, between right and wrong; between good and evil; and how often evil seems to be the easier choice, more attractive than the good. Could there be upright men on earth if in such cases people had no will-power to choose the harder, the less attractive of the two, the good? No, there could not! All men would be just playthings of their desires, slaves of their instincts, men of straw, easy-going, and easily perishing.

Will-power is therefore a great factor in establishing the rule of goodness on earth, and putting the stamp of character, of uprightness on our lives.

Will, like the other faculties of the soul is innate in us. But if we want it to serve us with vigor, efficiently, we must develop it by constant exercise, by training. The more we exercise our will, the more we gain in spiritual strength.

The best way to strengthen your will is by exercising it in little tests of self-imposed privations,

abnegations, self-restraint. Try now and then to deny yourself things which please your senses, and which may not even be forbidden you. Not often, just as a test to ascertain whether your soul is still holding the reins. For instance, try not to drink for a quarter of an hour when you come back from an outing dying with thirst. When your favorite cake is served, leave a piece of it on the table. When the taste of a dish leaves something to be wished for, do not make faces, but swallow it in silence; calamities are likely to happen in the kitchen too. And when at noon you bolt hungrily from school, do not fret and make a fuss about immediate starvation if your mother does not put your lunch before you at once. And when the soup is served, do not fall to it voraciously; give your stomach a lesson in discipline. However strongly a confectioner's show window may pull at your pocket money, know sometimes how to say no. If, when washing yourself the soap slips out of your grasp, do not get mad; pick it up with a smile. If a shoe lace snaps just when you are in a hurry, do not slam the shoe on the floor, but whistle a cheery tune while the lace is being tied up.

And when the May sun is shining brightly, can you stay with your books and study instead of running out to play? And in the mornings, when it is time to get up, can you jump out of your bed immediately without prolonged yawning and stretching under the warm blankets? When you have put something away and are looking for it, can you search without scattering things about? When there is a street scene, such as a drunk or a fire, can you

withstand your curiosity and not hang about for an hour? Can you show kindness to people who are "very unsympathetic" to you? Can you carry out your parents' bidding at once without grumbling and groping for excuses?

When anyone hurts you, can you temper aroused anger by a cold, dignified reply? When a story you are reading is intensely interesting, can you bring yourself to close the book and attend to some less interesting task? Can you sit quietly and listen attentively at school without fidgeting? Can you pull yourself together when depressed and walk erect when tired? Can you bring yourself to keep the lid for a time on some news you are itching to retail to your friends? And so forth. . . .

You may say that these are trifles, small matters. Yes, they are, but do you know that all great things consist of small parts, and that skyscrapers too are built of small bricks. These daily little victories will raise your self-confidence so that you will not too readily back away from difficulties which you may encounter in life. For he that has victoriously won in the hardest struggle—in self-conquest—can come out a winner in other struggles of life too. Such a person we call "a man of firm character"; he possesses both strength to resist and strength for action. *The smallest effort at self-denial, by which you train your body to obey your higher nature, is part of an invaluable amassing of energies, stored up for the time of temptation when unyielding resoluteness will be in demand*, just as in accumulators we can store up enormous electric power from tiny electric sparks. These experiments, these trifles will demonstrate to you that the spirit can really reign over the body.

Youth preserved in purity is a most sublime ideal. But to heights we can attain only by slow progress, by repeated efforts however small. Rome was not built in a day, and character is not a grand prize in a lottery which a lucky moment may win for us.

THE JOYS OF VICTORY.

ONE who has never denied himself things un-
forbidden can scarcely be expected to shrink
from things forbidden. On the other hand,
one who can voluntarily deny himself such trifles
as, let us say, a slice of cake in his early teens, can
well be counted upon to bear up strongly against
temptations of the senses later, in adolescence and in
manhood. Self-denial, however small, is a sacrifice,
it costs a struggle with our own selves. . . . But
then, the struggle itself has its own joys. In fact,
it is real boys who like so much to enter competi-
tions, who are so eager to vie with each other in tests
of strength, and are so flushed with happiness when
they win a match. Well, here are plenty of oppor-
tunities for you to exercise your spiritual "muscles",
to show your will-power, to develop it, to steel it.
Just try those little will exercises I suggested. Not
today or tomorrow only, but regularly. I feel sure
you will find real pleasure in them. Already this
straining, this testing of strength itself will stir your
enthusiasm and afford you joy; what then when the
triumphant feeling that human energy can conquer
all will come in the wake of your first efforts and
first little victories over your whims and weaknesses.

The joys of victory will spur you on to further
efforts. In these efforts—especially when an already
deep-rooted sinful habit is to be tackled—the best

procedure will be to commence by setting to yourself a short period, say four or five days, to see if you can hold out so long. Those five days having come off successfully, the realization that after all you possess a fairly effectual and sturdy will in your make-up will raise your mind again to win, and so the third and tenth week, until the evil force of habit has released its hold on you and disappeared from your life.

Not so long ago many tribes of the South Sea Islands believed that a sure way to gain additional strength and valor was to devour their enemies at the victorious conclusion of a tribal war. Among the aborigines of New Guinea the belief is still current that the strength of an enemy slain passes into the body of his slayer. This, of course, is barbarism and horrid superstition. It is, however, no superstition but sterling truth that the oftener you gain a victory over your clamorous instincts, the stronger your will-power will grow. The pagan Boethius expressed this truth with classical conciseness: "*Superata tellus sidera donat.*" "Overcome the earth and you gain the stars."

And do not think that you are embittering your life by having to be on guard always, and that self-control and self-denial are heavy burdens on your back. They are a burden, but a burden which lifts you upward. Wings are a burden, a weight on the bird, but if they were taken off, could it fly?

In every sort of warfare—and in the soul's warfare also—an offensive is the best defence. By hardening your will before the lower instincts grow and set upon you in full force you are really defending yourself beforehand by prevention. For a con-

scious hardening of the will in time reaps its special reward. Whose will is frail, who has to be tremblingly careful of his every step, word and glance, that one's life is indeed bitter, depressing. You, however, through continual will-gymnastics can develop it to the point where it will be at your beck and call as an obedient servant, *and defend itself by reflex action, almost automatically*, against all ignoble thoughts and desires. When a particle of dust is about to fall into your eye, the eyelid by reflex action closes involuntarily and keeps the harmful object out. Also a great reward for your earnest endeavors will be that your will having become strong, spontaneously, instinctively protects that invaluable treasure, your purity, like an invisible, impregnable suit of mail.

IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD.

SOME sceptics may shake their heads and say: "In our days these high ideals can no longer be realized. Perhaps it might be done if one went into a wilderness to live as a hermit, and there, out of contact with the world, devoted himself to the perfecting of his soul and the shaping of his character. But as things are! To live this turbulent life; to go to school; to be in touch with people of every sort and of different views and opinions; to go to places, shows; to stand in the hubbub of the street, in the whirling stream of city life and not to slip dazedly into the current—where is the man who can do it?"

Listen, my young man. I do not want to chase you into a wilderness, and yet I insist that you follow my counsel uncompromisingly. No need to seek

solitude, for there you would be but a lonely fragrance to God; rather stay with us here, in the wilderness of houses which breathe sin, here in the seething turmoil of the city, *here, however, be a fragrant rosebush of manly character, of Christian virtues.*

What do we learn from a rosebush, from the flowers, the trees, from green blooming nature? The roots of plants reach down into the dirty soil, into darkness, coldness, yet their flowers, their fruit are of exquisite form, of glowing color and beauty; their green and russet leaves wonder of symmetry and, massed in a landscape, exert a vitalizing, yet at the same time, soothing influence on man's nature. They spring from the dust, from the dirty soil, but leave everything behind that is of the soil—the smell, the look, the substance—and straining upwards where they receive sunshine, grow into an amazing variety of delectable sights. You too live on this earth, walk on it, work out your destiny on it, but don't let your soul be tainted by the dirt of sin, of low passions! Even if everyone were wallowing in filth; even if you were surrounded by a sea of human wickedness, you can still, by restraining your will, elevate yourself to a higher plane, into God's sunshine, and let the divine rays call forth in your soul the unearthly blossoming of a high-principled character.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

ANOTHER strong ally in your worthy struggles is the unwavering love of truth. It is a beggarly character that shows a lack of absolute truthfulness, and the honesty of a person whose every word we cannot rely on implicitly is more

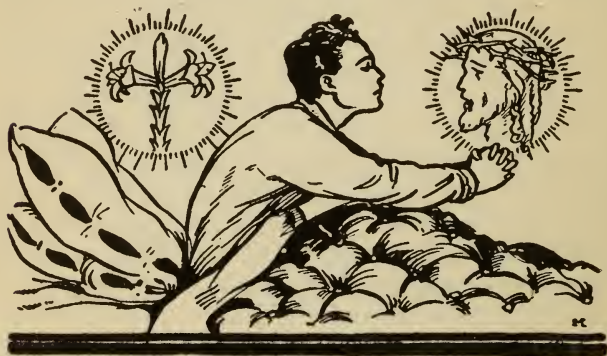
than questionable. We cannot trust him any longer. A point which is to be stressed is that *one who never lies does not easily stray into the snares of immorality*. The way of truth, of a good conscience, is always straight, open, clear; deception, duplicity, lying begin when thoughts to be concealed and actions to be ashamed of are rendering the mind uneasy. A liar dishonors himself, his character, his soul; neither will he shrink from defiling his body also by immoral practices. On the other hand, one whose self-esteem revolts against lying and does not tolerate it, will be able to defend himself more easily against bodily self-debasement too. Therefore, accustom yourself never to tell a lie, not even the smallest, that your word under all circumstances may be believed as the words of Holy Scripture. Bring yourself up to the point where you will be practically incapable of lying. What a beautiful tribute to yourself when you can rightfully say: "I am a boy who *cannot* lie." And one who cannot lie can not deteriorate morally, for he will avoid all such thoughts and actions as would prompt him to lie.

SPORTS AND PHYSICAL CULTURE.

HARDEN and strengthen your body as much as opportunity permits. The right type of physical culture may strengthen your soul also; while, on the other hand, neglect or pampering of the body is often the cause of moral falls. Examples of this are over-eating, weakened nerves, a bed too soft or too warm, aberrations of the imagination in idleness. Be a lover of all kinds of sports which are not harmful to health and have not de-

generated into roughness and brute force, into the "win by hook or crook" mentality.

Do not sit very long at a time—it disturbs blood circulation. *Make it your rule to tire yourself out thoroughly every day.* Take care to go to bed every night well tired out, that you may fall asleep soon. Many sins have had their origin in lying awake in bed. Engage in sports not just to acquire strong muscles, to become an athlete, to outdo or gain victory over others, but rather from the conviction that *a sturdily developed body is a much more suitable*



means for attaining the lofty aspirations of the soul, than a feeble, sickly one. A vigorous, hardened young body, inured to privations and occupying itself with its daily activities will not be troubled much by inordinate desires. In sports, therefore, do not aim at becoming a prize boxer, or a big league player, but at *making a powerful, disciplined instrument of your body, that can obediently and efficiently carry out the commands of your will.*

Don't pamper yourself with clothing nor let others nurse you in cotton. When I see youths buried in and bulky with underwear, shawls, sweaters and furs whenever the thermometer registers the slightest drop in temperature, I cannot but become suspicious of their moral purity. A hardened body warms a thousand times more than the most expensive fur coat. A young man, therefore, who wastes his youthful strength by immoral actions should not be surprised if his skin, blood vessels, nerves, are not functioning properly; if every draught is chilling him; if he is shivering even under the heaviest assortment of furs and woollens, and if he catches cold and is confined to bed every other month.

ENDURE SUFFERING.

LEARN to endure physical and mental suffering manfully. It ill-becomes manly character to fret and fume over the smaller or greater discomforts and adversities of life, or groan with grinding teeth under the hard blows of fate and bear them with ill-grace. What we should do instead is to work for spiritual gain from these adversities and utilize the energies obtained in an harmonic formation of our spiritual ideals. When you have a toothache, when ill, when something does not turn out to your satisfaction, when you are ignored, overlooked, or treated unjustly—even at such times be not dejected and sad. Long ago the pagan Epictetus discovered the great truth that the way of virtue is self-denial and suffering. Endeavor to enter actively, with life and spirit, into the events of your day. When a blow falls upon you, when ill, when neglected, when mistreated, do

not be heavy-hearted, don't bite your lips, do not clench your fist; try to profit by them instead. To profit? How? By setting your suffering, your pain to work in the rearing of your soul. When a sledge-hammer is pounding the glowing iron, it is shaping it into a strong tool or useful article; and in your case, at each hammer blow of mishap, try to mentally see through its real import, to get the gist of its meaning, to make your mind and spirit richer by experience. Sickness may mean that you have been careless, that you overrated the resistance of your physique. It also teaches us that health is a great gift of God which we do not appreciate sufficiently when we are in good health, and forget that at any moment, any time, mirth and laughter may cease. When disappointed in the outcome of an endeavor, your lesson may be that you had not put sufficient effort into it, or that you were not sufficiently prepared to succeed. Try it again with greater application and spirit. When unjustly treated, let it be a lesson to you that people sometimes make mistakes and have faults and resolve never to show the same fault when it will be your turn to deal with others or judge them. When you feel you have to work under a handicap compared with the easy, favorable conditions of others, gather confidence and courage from your very disadvantages and keep up with them, remembering that many great men became great only because they knew humility and abnegation and went through hardships and privations. In these struggles their will became as steel, their mind a treasure house of experience and of the knowledge of men. In possession of these qualities they then rose to greatness.

THE HEALTHY MODE OF LIFE.

PRIZE your body highly, though do not spoil it by pampering. Think of your body like St. Francis of Assisi, who named it "Brother Ass". It is a "brother", not an adversary; a travelling companion in life, a prized possession, as the ass is a valuable helpmate to the Italian villager. Yet it is just an "ass", not an overlord, just a servant expected to obey, not to command. With one who coddles himself overmuch, stuffs his body continually with food and dainties, who cannot deny anything to his clamorous stomach, the body will naturally gain mastery over the soul. Tell me, young man, what would you say if going out in the street one day there should be presented to your astonished eyes the spectacle of teamsters hitched before cartage wagons and horses sitting on the box! On the throne within you do not place that material nature whose destiny is to obey. That kingly soul which is appointed to reign do not put under the yoke!

You will do well if you regulate your food-taking also in a sensible way. Seasoned food excites the nerves, and excited nerves do not obey. Overeating emboldens the pampered body to come out with its unblushing demands. Do not eat much meat and food containing much starch, especially in the evening. Rather more of vegetables and fruit. One who is temperate in eating is his own good doctor. Don't go to bed immediately after supper with a full stomach. Go at least two or three hours later. Exercises which require close study leave off about an hour before retiring.

At supper, or after, take as little fluid as possible, and empty the bladder before going to bed, doing the same in the daytime at intervals of three to six hours. It is also important that you go to stool regularly. The human body is like a stove, it has to be stoked in order to give heat. A stove we heat with fuel, our body with food. The fuel burns swiftly in the stove, the food slowly in the body. A small part of the products of combustion goes off in the form of smoke and soot by the chimney, the greater part, however, remains as ashes on the grid, and has to be removed daily, otherwise the grid becomes choked and the fire goes out. In our body also various products of combustion originate; the smaller part of these leaves the body through the pores of the skin, as sweat and other secretions. Because of this it is necessary to clean the pores by frequent bathing, that is to keep them open. The greater part of the useless matter which the body cannot work off remains as ashes in the bowels. These, therefore, must be emptied daily, otherwise they may cause headaches, blood pressure, and other disturbances. Keep this physical need well regulated.

In youth you must entirely abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages! The majority of immoral actions are committed under the influence of liquor. Holy Scripture is not cautioning us without reason: "Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria." And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury. (Eph. 5, 18.) And at another place: "Wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkenness riotous: whosoever is delighted therewith shall not be wise." (Prov. 20, 1.)

A great many young men who for years had been able to preserve their purity through well-directed efforts lost it when their passions inflamed by wine overcame their will; the wine itself had weakened their will.

Through drinking many a youth first loses his sobriety and then the purity of his soul.

How serious and condemning the words of Holy Scripture: "Fornicatio et vinum et ebrietas auferunt cor," "Fornication and wine, and drunkenness take away understanding." (Os. 4, 11.)



Do not wear very tight trousers or such that chafe. Crossing your feet when sitting, hands held in the trousers pockets, much lolling in soft chairs may also be causes of irritation. Do not go to bed in the evening until you are tired, and in the morning don't stay in bed if you have had sufficient rest. Do not wear pyjamas or nightshirts too warm or too

soft, nor woollen underwear; their warmth causes sensualism. Keep your trousers up by suspenders, not by a belt; it may stifle blood-circulation in the abdomen. The bed should be hard rather than soft, and cold rather than warm. The purpose of a blanket is to hold the warmth of the body, which in daytime is protected by motion and clothing. When, therefore, it gives more warmth than the daytime temperature of the body, the excessive heat fans the nerves into feverish excitement and wakens strong temptations within us. A bed warm and all too soft is dangerous; it tends to excite sexual desires which usually require but little excitation and often come uninvited. Keep your hands over the blanket. In winter, when you use two, put your hands between them. Take care you sleep always in clean air. Whenever possible, sleep with the windows open. The fresh, invigorating air is a bath for the lungs just as water is for the body. Charged with renewed strength, how differently does he waken who has slept in a clean, aired room or outdoors from one who in the morning has to force himself awake out of the steamy, gassy clouds of his bedroom. *Always sleep on your right side*, not on the back; a warm spine tends to excite the system. Do not sleep on the left side; it oppresses the heart. In the morning do not stay in bed after awakening. It can be taken as a rule with no exception that staying in bed for a long time after awakening leads inevitably to the sin of self-pollution.

A celebrated orator said: "The devil is a great lord. He rises late. When he sets out on his daily round of destruction, the industrious have been at

work for a long time; those he cannot harm. But woe to the slothful whom he finds in bed. He lures and entices them so long that they fall at his feet as his slaves."

Prolonged sleep in the morning gives way to a dose. In this state the will is like melting butter: it falls into the clutches of sin without offering resistance. One who lolls awake in bed lolls on the devil's cushion. If there is nothing urgent, sleep while you can: *but when you wake up, get out of bed at once!* This is a most important rule, even in vacation time, even if there be no particular duties hurrying you. Wash yourself in cold water! Don't be afraid of fresh water. If possible, in the morning do short setting up exercises with the windows open; after that wash your entire body in cold water, or at least the upper part: then rub it thoroughly with the towel. This early exercise and cold ablution is a splendid invigorator of the nervous system.

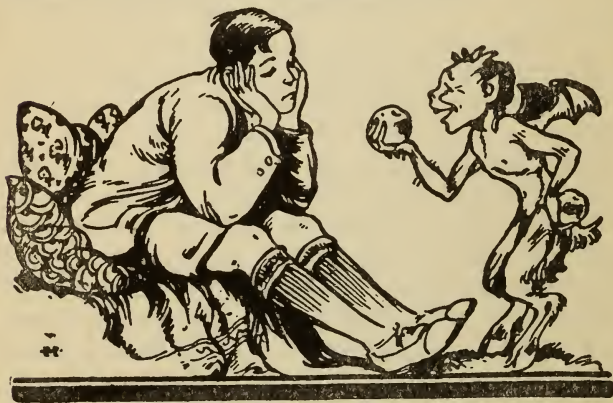
Especially take care, my dear young man, if sickness confines you to bed for days. During sickness occupy yourself with some light activity—pray, read, draw, play, for it is a sad fact that many young men weaken and pollute themselves by sinful thoughts and actions on the very sickbed where they wait for the return of their health by God's grace.

NEVER BE IDLE.

NOT without reason is idleness called the devil's cushion. I cannot too often warn you never to be idle, not even during vacation time.

Rambling in the mountains, I always make a halt on the banks of a rushing foaming mountain brook,

lost in deep-felt thought. What an energetic toiler such a little brook is! How it bores itself under the earth! How it pulverizes the rocks, how it digs, broadens, deepens its bed. It has no rest—not a moment's respite! Up here it is clear as crystal, tinted now a vivid blue, now green, in keeping with the caprices of the weather, but not a trace of murkiness or muddy streaks. When, however, in its course it descends to the leisurely plains where everything is easy-going, where there is little to do, it flattens out and becomes turbid and sluggish. It flows on to join the river, but sometimes coming to a depression in the land, its flow ceases and the former limpid, fresh water becomes part of a reedy, vermin-infested, ill-smelling marshland.



Inactivity, stagnation is a sign of death in nature; it is also a promoter of corruption in the spiritual life.

As long as the youth works sedulously boring, blasting his way through the rocks which obstruct

his life path, as long as he is steadfastly digging and cutting out the bed of a bright future for himself, his spiritual life, too, can easily remain pure. But the danger of a fall is close where youthful vitality, not engaged in earnest work, stagnates lethargically in a bog of boredom and indolence. What is idle is eaten by rust. Ovid, the Latin poet, concludes not without reason: "Venus otia amat," Immorality thrives in indolence. When temptation assails you so vehemently that you fear for strength to resist, it will help not to remain alone. In such a case, get up, leave your room and go among people, your parents, relatives, friends.

Even the otherwise licentious Ovid has this to recommend:

"Quisquis amas, loca sola nocent. Loca sola caveto!
Quo fugis? In populo tutior esse potes."

"When you are in love, lone places are harmful, avoid
such lone places!
Where to flee? In people's company you will be
safer."

The same he counsels in another couplet:

"Quid facies, facies si Veneris veneris ante?
Ne sedeas, sed eas, ne pereas per eas!"

"What are you to do if you come in the presence of
Venus?
Do not sit, go about, so you won't perish by her
wiles!"

A set of millstones is an ancient mechanism for grinding grain. The stones are so close to one another that when rotating with no grain between them they will chafe at and grind one another. Just so will the human mind corrupt itself if not kept busy with some useful activity. Be on your guard, especially during vacation time, when for many a

boy, not only the skin is tanned dark by the sun, but the soul is blackened by moral dirt. The moral deterioration of many a youth has had its beginning in vacation time when boredom overcomes him and he says he has nothing to do. People doing nothing learn to do wrong. A person with much leisure always finds opportunities for sinning. Especially dangerous is slothfulness during the rest period after dinner, because the increased vigor gained by food is often conducive to sinning. The devil is very busy providing his own type of occupation for the unoccupied. The human mind always craves employment; it is ever active; and when the boy is "doing nothing", he is already drawn to wrongful doings, for his stagnating vital forces seeking activity will break out in the form of immorality, in rankling looseness. One who cannot keep active will be set upon by impure thoughts. Thought breeds desire, desire prompts action, and actions become misdeeds, even corruption. Activity is the salt of life, which preserves men from going bad. The thing to do, therefore, is to throttle your instinctive wrong inclinations by unbroken activity. See to it that you have always something to do.

Everybody should have some favorite hobby which engrosses his mind and turns superabounding vitality to good use. He can be an enthusiastic collector of plants, of minerals, of stamps, etc. He can tinker with tools or work with the fret-saw. Some boys like to make chemical experiments or go in for photography. Others raise pigeons or rabbits, take an interest in gardening. Not a few are interested in music; the study of languages, drawing, painting, etc.

In every healthy youth there is a certain energy surplus. Now those who are carried off in the current of ungodly worlds waste their strength in sinning. Those, however, who think wisely know that the "surplus" shown in nature's bookkeeping must by no means be squandered, that it can be carried to some other account, and that it can be transformed into other energies doing useful work. It is clear then that the stronger are the passions with which you have to grapple, the more spiritedly you must fall to work, practically drowning your straining energies in activity. Ceaseless activity, an interest in worthwhile things, in your hobbies, will develop your physique, increase your skill and knowledge, and at the same time protect you from the molestations of disorderly instincts.

LOVE NATURE.

NOW I shall ask you a question. Have you a love for nature?

Every man may find inexhaustible enjoyment in nature; but whose soul can nature's flowery, eloquent splendor fill with purer joys than the soul of youth, the flower of humanity! Do you love to breathe the balmy fresh air of the woods into your expanding lungs? Do you love to listen to the humming of winged insects on the bank of a rivulet, as you meander peacefully through quiet meadows? Do you love to lie on the softness of a swelling, green, flowery carpet, and smile into the caressing sunshine? Do you love to hearken dreamily under rustling bushes to the warbling of nightingales or the trill of larks? Do you love to sound the crystalline depths of mountain lakes with eyes gazing below

in rapt, forgetful contemplation, and sigh thoughtfully: "Lo, so clear could be the depths of my soul also!" Do you love to sing in competition with the gusty breezes of hilarious winds? Do you love to climb mountains with a glow reddening your cheeks, and there, on peaks that reach into the clouds, give forth the overflowing happiness of your soul in a cheery song? Do you love Nature? Or do you prefer to go the same rounds day after day on city pavements and breathe the dust of the streets?

In any case, student life is bound up with staying much indoors. But living protractedly within four walls weakens both body and soul. Whenever, therefore, opportunity offers itself, take a jaunt out into open spaces, into the woods, up to the mountains! A healthy boy will certainly not keep quiet in a valley when he sees mountains before him. Listen to the talk of birds, the din of waterfalls, explore the secrets of hidden dells or caves, watch the flight of birds, the spiral soaring of eagles, study the habits of animals, appease your hunger with luscious berries and quench your thirst at a cool spring, lovingly embrace the expanse of earth and sky with outstretched arms, and let the beautiful song of the boy-scouts ring forth from your chest:

"Up with your heads, lads, the trumpet rings out,
Let us stand in the battle-front gaily!
Life is waiting, this fight is our own without doubt;
And like soldiers we all campaign daily.
The weapons we boast are our arms, good and strong,
Our eyes full of ardor, our hearts full of song;
And wherever we look, to our joy there appears
Victorious triumph to hallow our years!"

—Sandor Sik "Boy Scout March."

You may have observed that after your lungs had been saturated with the fresh air of the woods, studying was much easier and your thinking faculties and memory became keener. Not only was your physical health invigorated by that day's outing, but your mental energies also became livelier and more elastic.

Young men who cannot participate in the merry games of their schoolfellows, but hold aloof, clouded in gloomy blues, should see a doctor; they are in ill-health; or better, they should seek spiritual counsel, for their souls also are diseased.

Boys who make the quiet woods ring with their cheery songs and vivacious play and let their peal of laughter awaken echoes among the trees are a hundred times dearer to me than the pavement-wearing loafers, than those who sit woebegone at the window, absent-mindedly watching the world and wishing for something to happen, too lazy to fill their own lives with interesting events, or than that other class who slouch about, depressed by the burden of unfulfilled expectations and sinking ever deeper into melancholy, into a disgust for life.

My ideal is the healthy, cheerful, vivacious youth full of spirit and laughter, bursting with vigor, with a big, warm, fluttering heart, courageous and enterprising, but possessing a moral constitution as fine and sensitive as a seismograph and as noble as a good example; *a youth who is confident of himself but devoid of self-conceit.*

During the Social Hygiene Exhibition, held in 1932 in Budapest, the Hungarian Medical Society for Sex Ethics, in two sets of rules, announced and

placarded their views on the line of conduct to be followed by young people:

1. Do not load yourself with food at one meal. Take supper three hours before going to bed. Take little and easily digestible food for supper.
2. Do not drink alcoholic beverages, much tea, strong coffee. Do not eat strongly-seasoned food or much meat.
3. Empty the bowels regularly every day, for constipation causes blood stagnation in the abdomen.
4. Sleep in a cool room, on a hard mattress, lying on the right side. For covering use a light blanket, not too warm.
5. Do not lie in bed awake, get up as soon as sleep leaves you. Your clothing should not be of the sort which softens and enervates the body.
6. Take particular care for the cleanliness of the skin. Wash yourself on as extended a body surface as possible. Bathe frequently and swim whenever possible. A lukewarm evening bath helps to produce restful sleep.
7. Move about as much as you can. Love nature. Follow some kind of sport, spend at least an hour daily in a vigorous, brisk walk.
8. Eschew obscene books, periodicals, pictures, the company of people indulging in smutty conversations, licentious and indecent places of amusement.
9. Endeavor to create within you and about you a morally clean atmosphere; the best defense is the offensive.

10. Seek intimacies with God. Read and study His revelations. Lay bare your soul to Him. Wait faithfully for the granting of His graces, and live in the knowledge of His continuous presence.

The Ten Commandments of Marriage:

1. When your body is fully developed, and you are in a position financially to maintain a family, marry soon.
2. Youth should, in the first place, be devoted to a thorough-going preparation for solving the future problems of life.
3. As a single man spend as little as possible on amusements and put your savings aside for founding a family. Do not drink nor smoke.
4. Do not regard marriage as a fountain of pleasure, when everything will be permitted, for matrimony has its own difficulties, trials, temptations and struggles.
5. Matrimony is a serious life task, a vast conglomeration of duties, and for this reason a fit field of endeavor for a manly character.
6. Do not select your companion for life with a view to material advantages, because bad management and blows of fate may ruin even great wealth. Build your material existence on work and thrift.
7. Nor let an attractive exterior be important with you; for beauty wilts, and even when present, it is a treasure of doubtful value; it may be the source of much trial and temptation.
8. In your life-companion look for spiritual qualities,—fidelity, diligence, gentleness, patience, purity: and cultivate the same yourself.

9. For this very reason do not be rash in choosing a life-companion. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted in daily life with the person of your choice, and do not be led by momentary fancies and moods.
10. The engagement period should not be prolonged. Avoid immodest, erotic, tete-a-tetes. Prepare yourself with sacred earnestness for the great tasks of life awaiting you. The happiest life is in the harmonic union of souls who believe in God.

A FATHERLY FRIEND.

NEVER, under any circumstances, turn to friends for information on sexual matters.

When the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch. How could a person enlighten you about your great problems who himself struggles under the weight of similar problems, and, no doubt, obtains his "enlightening" disclosures from muddy, untrustworthy sources, from grubstreet literature and kindred exchanges of thought. These "experienced" friends usually talk of this tremendously serious subject in such a vein, so coarsely, so frivolously that after talks of this sort your soul cannot but grow restless, your imagination more inflamed and charged with more unruly, unclean images. Pointedly remarks Holy Scripture: "Treat not with a man without religion concerning holiness, nor with an unjust man concerning justice, nor with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous, nor with a coward concerning war, nor with a merchant about traffic, nor with a buyer about selling, nor with an

envious man of giving thanks, nor with the ungodly of piety, nor with the dishonest of honesty, nor with the field laborer of every work, . . . give no heed to these in any matter of counsel. But be continually with a holy man, whomsoever thou shalt know to observe the fear of God, whose soul is according to thy own soul: and who, when thou shalt stumble in the dark, will be sorry for thee." (Ecc. 37, 12-15.)

Nor seek for an answer to your doubts in so-called medical books. Some of the widely advertised medical books have been written with the profit motive in view, not to instruct the mind or edify. In this field, as I have repeated so often, the issue is decided by the will, not by knowledge. One may know how the human organs function and to the last detail the dangers threatening those who tamper with them; he will nevertheless stray and sink into immorality if he lack a strong, disciplined will, built up by conscious endeavor.

I do, however, strongly recommend you not to wrestle alone with your perplexities. "Woe to him that is alone," we read in Holy Scripture, "for when he falleth he hath no one to lift him up." (Eccl. 4, 10.)

Whom then are you to ask for enlightenment when assailed by questions weighty and worrying? In the first place, your father, mother or your spiritual director. If your parents can not be of help, or if you are too shy to approach them frankly, you can always turn with full confidence to one of the priests of your faith, to a spiritual director. With him, however, be absolutely sincere, and you will find that the mere fact of having told him your diffi-

culties or temptations has already relieved your soul and rendered it more peaceful. Do not think he will betray your confidence if you lay bare to him the agitation of your soul in its entirety. He will not look down upon you because of your strayings and struggles, but will indeed feel honored that you have come to him with trust, with a singleness of heart. He knows that if he did not answer your questions, you would obtain answers elsewhere, answers that would be harmful. He knows that in your immature years you are groping about in a tangle of difficulties as a lonely wanderer who has lost his way in a starless night. However, what you learn from him is not to be given to your friends in thoughtless gossip. Always remember that this knowledge is a sacred trust, that it may perhaps be too early yet to share it with others; that you possess a sharp tool which, although it injures you no longer, can still be dangerous to your unguided companions.

AT THE SOURCES OF NEW LIFE.

MOST important of all, there is yet another double aid all-powerful to help youth in its battles—Confession and Holy Communion.

Here I do not intend to treat in detail of these efficacious, self-edifying, self-controlling, strengthening, regenerating means of defence which the Sacraments afford. I only wish that you could already think of confession as befits a judicious, self-conscious young man. A small child is afraid of washing himself; the spiritually small of spiritual washing. Those who are yet undeveloped mentally hang back from it shiveringly; however, I presume that

you can already appreciate the edifying, the deeply-plowing power of confession, that you do not only appreciate it, but also make use of it without being urged to do so. A poisoned body can not recover until it has eliminated the poisonous matters; and if it suffers these to remain, it will perish. So also perishes the soul which permits sin to remain. The harder your struggles, the oftener you should go to confession, and if possible, always to the same confessor.

But go to confession with sincerity, actuated by a strong resolve to mend. The moment you have told the confessor your problems, you have already made a long step towards amendment, for you have forced your recalcitrant nature in a direction in which it was unwilling to go. At confession you will find a fatherly hand which will extract the thorn and put soothing balm on the wound. You will find a forgiving father who joyfully presses to His breast the son whom He believed lost. To err is human, but to admit our faults with a firm resolve to amend is respectable manliness. What precious, invigorating springs well up in your soul when you kneel in the confessional and throw the soul's door open! The manifestation of your most secret passions, the incipient ravages of sin, the raging storms of temptations, the open wounds of your soul are laid bare to your confessor, who attends to them not only with the love and gentleness of Christ, not only with deep sympathy, compassion and experience, but also with a healing power conferred by his divine appointment.

And after you have listened to the admonitions and exhortations of an experienced spiritual counsellor and leave the confessional, your face gives

forth a radiance like the candles at Christmas Mass, you draw a long breath, for a heavy burden has rolled off your soul: Thank God, from now on I can commence a new life! And I will not fall back into the old sin. No, no, never!

Who knows the number of those whom confession and subsequent Holy Communion have freed from the serfdom of sin. It would give me the greatest pleasure, my dear young man, if you would engrave on your memory this advice of mine: *For the soul of him who begins in youth the beautiful practice of going to confession once a month, and continues this through life, I do not feel any anxiety!* It may be that he will stumble now and then in life; he may even fall;—he will, however, stand up again, and will not remain grovelling in sin!

THE LORD IS WITH ME.

WHEN St. Teresa first thought of building a convent, she had only three pennies. She said: "Three pennies and Teresa—that is very little; but three pennies, Teresa and the Good Lord—that is very much." And the convent was erected.

You also want to build up in your soul a beautiful temple of God. Many times, perhaps, you have tried it, but with little success—perhaps because you had not fully availed yourself of God's help. Your own strength is indeed insufficient, but if your earnest good will combines with God's fortifying grace, you will go from success to success. Not without reason holds an old saying: "*Deo favente navigas vel vimine,*" *when God sends favoring winds, you can sail in a wicker-basket.*

Receive, then, frequently the bread of Angels, the Lord Jesus, in Holy Communion; and then, when the fire of Christ's holy Blood flames up within you, bend your fighting brow unto His hand and whisper this beautiful Communion prayer to Christ now dwelling within you: "Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O, good Jesus, hear me. Within thy wounds hide me. Never permit me to be separated from Thee. From the indignant enemy defend me. In the hour of my death, call me. And bid me come to Thee, that with the saints I may praise Thee. For all eternity. Amen."

Sincere religious faith is truly our staunchest support in our struggle for purity of soul. To everyone the question presents itself: "After all, why may I not do what nature so often and so vehemently demands of me!" And to this a calm and satisfactory answer can be given only by one who realizes that above nature stands the *supernatural order* the attaining to which should be the most sublime enterprise of life.

In 1781, at the age of 27, Mozart writes: "Natural instinct functions within me as in others; it is perhaps stronger in me than in the simple peasant. Despite that, I cannot look upon the lives of countless youthful contemporaries as patterns to be copied. For religion rules my conduct. On the one hand, I possess too keen a sense of honesty and I have too great a love for my neighbour to stoop to the seducing of innocent creatures; on the other, I have too great a concern for my health to sacrifice it in disreputable love affairs. Therefore I am ready



to swear by my statement that there has never been a weak moment in my life."

As from the centre of a circle ways lead in every imaginable direction towards its periphery, so must you direct all the events of your life that they may point towards God, the great centre of the world. Endeavor, my dear young man, to form the closest and most intimate friendship with Our Lord Jesus. Turn to Him in all matters with a singleness of heart, with pulsating love. The Person of Our Lord Jesus is by no means a dimmed historical figure, but is today and forever the Savior who radiates enlivening energy, who loves and fortifies your soul. He shall not be a memory, a faded image to you, *but the great vitalizing Reality*, whom you consult about all your plans, in whom you place all your trust, who, you know, is rejoicing with you in all successes and grieves with you in adversity.

In the springtime of life every youth has a craving for ideal friendship; first love, too, blossoms from this urge. If I may so express myself, let yourself then fall in love with Our Lord Jesus, Our Lord Jesus Christ,—a nobler ideal, a more majestic friend, a more resourceful helpmate you would vainly search for in the whole world. Accustom yourself to the thought that Our Lord Jesus is with you always and everywhere. From early morning till late at night He is your companion: in the street, at school, at play; He is there when you study, when you amuse yourself, when you are alone, and at night when you go to bed, He sits down at your bedside, looks upon you with loving eyes and utters the consoling words: "My son, today you have fought well!"

Learn to say your prayers in this spirit. Tell me, young man, are you in the habit of praying *regularly*? Regularly, that is, every morning and night, and do you pray well? With attentiveness, with fiery love, with fresh soul, willingly, devotedly. Flowers wilt if they are not sprinkled with water; the flowers of your moral life will also wilt if you do not sprinkle them regularly from the clear brook of prayer. In such a prayer you are close to eternity, kneeling before the throne of the Almighty, where all storms die down, where the waves of the agitated soul become calm, and the struggle becomes easier, or at least, more hopeful.

Tell me, my dear young man, can you pray in this way? Or have you never known how? Then learn to pray. Have you left off long ago? Begin anew! But not tomorrow! Today, no later! Tonight, and always from now on.

A certain man had the desire to enter a very rigorous order. Before admission, however, he was put to a test to ascertain if he had the calling. He was brought into the church where in future during long nights he would have to keep vigil for hours. He was shown the refectory where he would fast rather than eat. He tried out his hard bed where he would spend his nights sleeplessly tossing and turning rather than resting. In the end he was asked: "What do you think now; would you like to come here? Will you be able to stand all this?" The only question the man asked was: "Will there be a crucifix in my room?" "Yes, there will be." "In that case I believe I am in my place," he answered and entered the order.

Dear young man, can you thus love Our Lord Jesus? Whatever temptation may swoop down upon you, can you think of Him immediately and say: "I am in order"?

Without the aid of religion it is well-nigh impossible to observe purity in youth. He who thinks he could live chastely without religion, would act like one trying to fly without wings, to draw water from a rock or to dig a well with a pen-knife. St. Augustine expresses himself sagaciously: "Regnat carnalis cupiditas, ubi non est Dei caritas."—Immorality reigns where love for God is absent.

My dear young man, there may be times when temptations of sexual passion rush upon you like a conflagration, like a raging sea, devouring everything; moments may come when you will feel that all thought, spirit, endeavor have died out in you, and only animal instinct remains to whip your body with its violence—to pass through those trying moments unscathed nothing less than the strong right arm of the Saviour can support you.

No better advice can I give you than that which St. Catharine of Genoa gave her godchild in a world incredibly corrupt: "Let Jesus be in your heart, eternity in your mind, the world under your feet, God's will in your actions, and above all, let His love brighten up your soul."

Look into the eyes of your crucified Christ as a nestling bird looks at its mother as she hovers above it. Be a dazzled singing bird of eternal purity, be of prayerful spirit, *always bear Christ within*; thus you will experience the joy that with Him it is impossible to be impure.

AND AFTER THAT . . . WHAT?

AND if all you have read has not gripped your soul so powerfully as to definitely tear you away from sins of impurity, at least read this little story, then close the book and reflect upon it:

One day a young man dashed in to St. Philip of Neri, a-flutter with joy. "What is it, what makes you so happy?" asked the saint. "What could I be but happy? My father has given his consent to my becoming a lawyer." "Well, you will be a lawyer, and what after that?" "After that I shall make much money and I shall have everything I want and shall live in grand comfort in my old age." "And what after that?" asked the saint. At this point the youth became sad; "After that," he spoke slowly—"I must die." "And after that," broke in the saint for the last time; "What will become of you after death?" And Francis Spazzara, so the youth was called, from that day on led an honest, upright life, never forgetting that one day he would have to give an account of his whole life to God.

My dear young man, if nothing can wrench you away from sinful habits, ponder over the profoundly serious question: "And after that . . . ?" "What will become of you after that?" When you are to appear before an Almighty and all-seeing just God to give account! "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin," says Holy Scripture. (Ecc. 7, 40.) I saw this epitaph on an old gravestone, "Ut moriens viveret, vixit ut moriturus."—"In order to have life in death, he lived as one who knew he would die." How much profound wisdom in a few words!

Bear in mind that one day you will be called by God to account not only for your actions, but also for the most trivial word and the most hidden thought. Before that God who saw you when no one else did, who saw you in the dark bedroom, saw you under the blanket, saw you in out-of-the-way corners, who heard your secret conversations and weighed your thoughts. Young man, do you want to rise up with soiled body and soul for that great Day of Accounting?

Not, I believe!

You want to remain a young man of pure heart! Don't you?



CHAPTER VII.

RADIANT SOUL—SPARKLING EYES.

THE Lord left with us three souvenirs from paradise: the light of the stars, the beauty of the flowers, and the brightness of a pure-hearted young person's eyes. Of the three the third is the most beautiful. For the pure-hearted youth is a hero whose struggles are harder than the fury of battles, but his laurels of victory are not reddened by an enemy's blood, engilded instead by the sunny brightness of a triumphant human soul, and irradiated by an aurora lit up from the glowing beams of an unstained conscience. Due to the close connection obtaining between our body and soul, the felicity of a well-ordered soul radiates through our body, through our glances; the radiant soul enlightens and kindles sparkling eyes.

THE GREATEST VICTORY.

THE greatest victory is to remain in control over our own selves. Aware of this already the old pagans paid spontaneous respect and tribute to those who could bend the strongest of instincts, the sexual instinct, to their will. As far

as the records of history reach back, there is always evidence that purity was held in high esteem in the pagan world. Cicero writes with animation: "Nihil est virtute amabilius," Nothing is lovelier than virtue. In Rome, a temple was built to Pudicitia, the goddess of chastity. Tibullus' book sets it forth spiritedly: "Casta placent superis," "The chaste are pleasing to the gods." Lictors preceded the Roman Vestal virgins as a sign of great respect. When the vehicle of a Vestal accidentally met a person condemned to death, the condemned was pardoned. As the Vestals in Rome so the Druids in Gaul and the Priests of the Nile in Egypt were the objects of deep reverence for their self-denying life.

The sage of the Old Testament too exclaims in perplexity: "Three things are hard to me, and a fourth I am utterly ignorant of: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, how a ship floats on the sea, and the way of a man in youth." (Prov. 30, 18-19.)

In our age too, even the morally depraved feel an irresistible reverence, a certain deep emotion, in the presence of those the purity of whose lives is impregnable. Schiller, the great German poet, writes:

"Show me the man who can impugn, in sooth,
The holy magic of unsullied youth,
The talisman of innocence and truth!"

Even a cynical denier of moral worth can not emancipate himself from the influence of moral superiority radiating forth from a pure-hearted youth. Yes, the earth does bear nothing of greater value on its surface than a morally perfect, manly character.

The most precious gem in the crown of humanity's excellences is the pure-hearted youth who achieved victory over himself. He is the strongest pillar of society, for with a morally cankered youth, society itself will perish; he is the pledge of a brighter future, its star of hope. Bright he is like the stars, which only our astounded glances and melting thoughts can reach.

"O, HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THE
CHASTE GENERATION."

THERE is much talk these days about the beauty of the human body. It is true, man is the crown of creation, but not so much by reason of his physical beauty as by reason of his spiritual majesty. For how insignificant is even a sweet child's head and golden curls, the smiling brightness of wide-open children's eyes, the ruby-red of children's lips ever babbling—all this—if we consider that in a spotless human body God's temple is being erected, and that behind the eyes smiling with dewy freshness *an altar has arisen in every man in whom the eternal God has prepared an abode for Himself!* An old saying holds that the eyes are the mirrors of the soul. No other beauty mirrors itself in the human eye more triumphantly than the soul's purity in the face of a youth.

Observe the ardent enthusiasm, the energetic resoluteness, the perennial cheerfulness, the singing joy, the budding spring rolling forth from a chaste youth's lustrous eyes like a swelling sail unfurling in the wind, like dawning hope, like a heavenly hymn. Fresh forces are evolved from day to day

in his years of youth, latent energies unfold themselves, and his soul is a-tremble with sacred expectations.

Truly, the sexual power conserved intact which a youth subjects and turns into other channels is a source of energy immensely rich for manly creative work, exacting positive strength and perseverance. His bursting vitality, his ambitious plans and wishes bear witness that sexual continence is of some mysterious, beneficial influence in dynamizing his mental activities. In him a sparkling spring is singing of the charm of youth, of its joys, hopes, endeavors; and while his poor erring companions have squandered away the better part of their spirit and body in immoral dissipations, and now vegetate in misery with a ragged soul sunk into dejected resignation, his heart beats aloud with joy, his clear eyes shine like forget-me-nots from the shores of heavenly lakes, and his energies enthusiastically face the tasks and problems set before him. Sexual dissipation deals destruction, while continence bestows freshness and vitality upon the mind and organism.

With wild force a mountain brook races on among the rocks. If let loose, it would cause terrible destruction. The human brain, however, confines it between strong dams and conducts it through steel pipes to turbines, and lo! the otherwise destructive elemental power is transformed into electric light and becomes the driving power of humming engines. Sexual instinct is a similar wild, unruly force of nature. If let loose it will deal dreadful destruction to your ideals, your creative impulses, your soul and body; if, however, it is repressed between the steely

walls of self discipline until the time, when in the sacrament of marriage it may be employed according to the majestic plans of the Creator, the otherwise destructive power will be transformed into a fountain head of sunny, happy married life.

*O, glorious blossoming of the springtime of life!
Sky-vaulting hopes and yearnings of human souls
born for eternity!.. O how beautiful a chaste rising
generation!*

If youth would but know what a miraculous source of strength lies in spotlessly preserved purity, not for the world would they so carelessly fling it away from them!

WHAT IS REAL LIBERTY?

LIBERTY inspires youth! Good! so it should be. But is there a freer man than one who can with masterful energy create order in the sanctum of his soul and safeguard it from the tyranny of his low passions? And is there a more pitiable slave than one who is cast into the heavy chains of slavery by the sin of impurity, by the blind instincts of the body? The free man is not he who does what he pleases; it is he who can will what he has to do; who can command himself and then obey that command.

To live immorally—is this freedom? If it were, do you know what would be the freest population on earth? A swine herd in the midst of a puddle! This kind of liberty is soundly denounced in these lines of the poet, Logau:

“If it be freedom to indulge each whim of blood,
Then are free people like a sow that rolls in mud!”

Real freedom can be appreciated only by a pure-hearted young man, *for real freedom consists in the freedom of the soul*. And the noblest warrior is one who goes into war to battle for the liberty of his soul and who spreads and propagates the ideals, principles and aims of such a war.

Perhaps to disseminate these ideals you too may join up with others who are already at work. Look around you, and you will see how many are struggling, sinking, drowning in this nefarious sin. You may know of such among your companions. Be their saving angel. *Give this book into the hands of as many young men as possible*. Who knows how many you could thereby save from corruption. When in the course of your life you realize how enormous is the number of propagators, henchmen, co-operators in sin, in filth, in shamelessness; when you see the hosts of insidious influences at work, ruining souls and spreading immorality—let a sacred defiance and dogged resolution flare up within you: if others can hurt souls, I will try to *guard* them! If they can damn souls, I will try to *save* souls! At times the young can do more in these matters than anyone else. As you too are still young, some other youth will more easily open his inner life to you. When a friend starts to talk to you about immorality or even hints at it, and you warn him with deep earnestness, with noble emotion, but with resoluteness, perhaps you will have saved your companion from his first fall. And could a more wholesome joy blossom in your heart that you will feel that night as you say the earnest prayer: “O God, I thank you that I was able to save a soul for you today.” Talk, therefore, to them warm-heartedly but chiefly by the

example of your pure life. What a mysterious thrill should run through your being at the thought of having power to save worthy members for the motherland and immortal souls for virtue, by words, by example.

"God sent me, O my brothers, to you now
That the celestial radiance of His brow,
His living fire that has lit my soul,
May shine from me, a saving aureole.
To brothers who must wander in the night
God sent me as his glow-worm, bearing light."

—Alexander Sik.

HEAVEN ON EARTH.

THE above-described tranquil superiority and soul-freedom lends to the face of an innocent child the enchanting expression which painters study when they would portray an expression of angels—supernatural beauty. The face of a pure-hearted, chaste youth reflects the same inner, heavenly beauty. Long ago the pagan Plato said the same: "What do we need to see God? Purity and death." A cloudless sky at dawn has not such a smile; bright stars at night have not such a glow; a pearly dewdrop has not such a sparkle; a crystal-clear mountain lake has not such limpidity—perhaps indeed, the countenance of angels would be such if they took on human bodies. An angelic soul in the beauty of blossoming spring gazes through those eyes; a spotless soul's beautitude pours forth its beams through that pair of eyes.

One of Goethe's admirable sayings is that from God we should ask for two gifts; great ideas and a pure heart. Purity establishes harmony between the lower and higher elements of man. Purity of life is

man's most precious treasure, the foundation of heroism, a heavenly spark, *the supreme manifestation of his likeness to God.*

Scarcely is there anything more sacred in this world than a young heart to whom sin is unknown.

REMAIN AWAKE.

IT may be, my dear young man, that you are returning from a long way of erring, and that the phantoms of years spent in sin are haunting you. Don't be discouraged! Having again found the Lord, abide with Him always! Having awakened from a dreadful dream, remain awake! Just read what immeasurable joy flows from this letter which a young soldier reader of mine wrote me, when, after stumbling for years, he found his way back to Our Lord Jesus:

" . . . deeper, ever deeper I sank. My sins sent me into the hospital for the first time, but it was not enough; I landed in a hospital for the second time, not even that was enough; for a third time I had to go to the hospital . . . then I said: Stop, this will be the last of it.

"When I came out of the hospital, the confessional was my first place of call. It was my resurrection. My God! What that confession meant to me. All the pleasures of the world, a thousand years of intoxicating nights could not afford the happiness I felt after Holy Communion. It was a hard struggle; three times I went back to the confessional; *but because I willed it, there had to be success.* I was a soldier, and still am a soldier, hardened; and yet in front of the altar I broke into tears. I cried like

a little child. Until I became conscious-stricken, I looked to sin for happiness; and if there I could find a few moments of seeming happiness, afterwards I felt a hundred times more forsaken. There was something which I felt lacking in my life, and I foolishly searched for it where it could never be found.

"Now I have gained lasting happiness. The greatness of my happiness I should like to make all my erring young brothers feel, to pour it into their souls that they might see what happiness they can exchange for momentary ignoble pleasures. Brother! The happiness I felt is indescribable. For days before Holy Communion I am impatient with the slowness of time; during these days I have only one thought—the Most Holy Eucharist. And after receiving, my heart almost bursts and I would fain prostrate myself and say: Lord, it is good to be with you . . . My unfortunate brother, has the world given you such joys? Vainly would you say it has. I have ascended that calvary. I have waded in sin, in corruption, just as you; but after intoxicating moments, I looked with stony gaze into the future and searched for a spot where *a longer, more lasting happiness could be found*. Now the old, sad past seems to have been but a bad dream. But when I think of it, my smiling cheerful features droop and give way to sorrow; it is however, not like other sorrows; it does me good. The thought that I have sinned hurts . . . : I am glad it hurts. I am like one who, awakening from a terrifying sleep exclaims: My God, how good that I am awakened. . My dear brother, hear my counsel! *Remain awake!*"

Yes, remain awake and be happy; be of good cheer. Real, pure joy is another excellent weapon in our battles against immorality. Where the sun's rays do not reach, rankles mould; musty air stifles and an ugly crowd of cellar insects crawl about. And the mould of sin, the foul-smelling air of decay, the worms of immorality more easily beslime and overrun a sullen, cheerless soul. Therefore, the purer your soul, the more silverily the merry laughter that will ring forth from your chest! After all, who should be merrier than a pure-hearted, noble-minded youth who loves his God! Refute, boys, the erroneous notion that sin affords joy, and that if one wants pleasure he has to reach out for sin. O, my dear young man, just try it out, just experience what a pitiful paltriness is all the promised pleasure and sly enticement of a thousand sins in comparison with that gentle restfulness and serene felicity which flows over the entire being of a chaste youth—of a youth who can look straight into the eyes of His Saviour.

SO IT WILL BE—WILL IT NOT?

THE last word, my young friend, which I wish to direct to you can only be these: guard that precious treasure, the purity of your young soul. If there be any falls in the past to repent, it does not matter now; at last you have resolved that from now on your life will be changed. Don't forget my word: no one has yet been unredeemably lost unless he himself gave up hope.

However deeply you may have sunk, my dear young man, there is a comeback. In youth every-

one is confronted by his growing nature, with hard struggles ahead of him. Some young men pass through this difficult period with comparative ease, while others have to cut their way through in hard battles. Your passions perhaps assail you with such unbridled force that you start up in terror and say: I can't resist it, I can't remain pure. No, that is not so. You already know, don't you, that it is possible even then to resist and remain victorious. *It is possible—but it calls for hard work!* It costs whole-hearted devotion, constant vigilance and unflagging perseverance. Adopt as yours the slogan which Seeland, a province of Holland, ceaselessly at grips with the tides, wrote into its coat-of-arms: "Luctor et emergo," Struggle and rise victoriously from the seas.

To live in purity *will not be easy*, for continence is not innate in man. He is not born with it, *but he becomes such* at the cost of hard struggle. Though reason tells you to remain pure, and religion too, the present day world, its frivolous attitudes, its thousands of temptations, and your own human nature disposed to sin will blare into your ears: don't remain, don't remain!

And yet you must lead a life of purity, because the reward to be gained is worth the greatest struggle. This path leads into spiritual heights. The path to the stars is not an easy path. Long ago Seneca found that out. "Non est ad astra mollis e terris via." But the moral strength which you exercised and built up in youth will be the sure instrument to carve out success and establish golden happiness in your manhood.

Let this thought fortify you even during the most vehement temptations—now I am fighting not only for myself but for my descendants also.

Everywhere newspapers are full of advertisements that tell about strengthening, regenerating, blood-nourishing drugs. "Use these pills", "Drink that extract", "Take so much of these salts in the morning", "So much of that pick-me-up in the evening" and you will be hale and hearty and enjoy a long life. Do you know what is the surest guarantee of long and healthy life? *A young life spent in purity and undefiled by immorality!*

I believe you have clearly understood it from this book: sexual life is not an invention of the devil, is not a filthy matter, but is, on the contrary a sublime and sacred gift of the Creator to man, a sign of His confidence in man. If it be a gift of God, it cannot be sinful but can be only a sacred matter. And your standing on guard in youth, your constant alertness, your struggles are not *against* sexual matters but *for them*, in order that they may be preserved intact until the time arrives when, according to God's will, you will be allowed to live a conjugal life.

If you take my advice now, in years to come, in mature manhood your thoughts will revert with gratefulness to the time when, as a mere boy, you read a book, whose author and title had long been forgotten, but which had saved you from serious false steps, from moral corruption.

My dear young friend! I have spent many years among boys. Many I have seen budding forth and bursting into splendid manly characters. Many I have seen growing, developing into mighty oaks of

virtue and wisdom. But alas, I have also seen broken, blighted, crushed youth. I have seen many a young oak growing vigorously for a time, but later bored and gnawed by unseen worms and sapped by the nameless sin. And many of these set their foot on the path of sin through mere ignorance and carelessness just because they had no one to warn them in time with gentle admonishings. I want to believe that there will be young men in whose lives the earnest pages of this book will mean a turning point, a breaking with sin, and a new life.

THE NEW GENERATION.

THE sun of our age is setting. Of an age which proudly wrote only "knowledge" and "technical progress" on its brow. Its slogan was to know everything, and to know only. This material outlook, however, has annihilated many of the world's high values.

There is great need, therefore, for a new generation to come forward. A new generation wearing on its brow the sign of the cross, the soul's goodness, and emitting from its eyes the rays of moral purity. May youth come forward and put its shoulders to the great task of rebuilding the world on foundations of brotherly love and true Christianity. Let it adopt and realize the teachings of Christ, for principles of life more ideal and more practical never have been and never will be taught and revealed in this world.

Your friends may come along bent upon seducing you and saying, "You are striving in vain. All is of no avail . . . There is no chaste youth in the world . . . One falls in his middle-school years,

another in the university, but nobody remains continent until he comes before the marriage altar . . .” Now, my dear friend, believe what I am writing here: Yes, there are middle-school students, university students, young men graduates who are fighting their daily battles for purity with a victorious brow, and without falling. Yes, there are such—and their number is increasing from year to year—who are passing unscathed through the thousands of temptations that beset this wicked world, and who do not bring a crippled body, contaminated blood and a ragged soul to the marriage altar, but instead the triumphal wreath of their victorious spiritual battles: a strong, youthful body, iron health, an ardent heart and a courageous soul.

Yes, their number is ever increasing; this formerly so timid fire is spreading ever wider; this odour of Christ is strengthening ever more perceptibly; *yes, chaste-living youth today is already an entrancingly beautiful, great, sacred reality.* It is up to you, dear friend, to add one more to this legion of spiritual heroes.

O, *moral purity*, most beautiful ornament of the human soul! Vanquish the thousand and one evil spirits of lust, expose their pitfalls, conquer and bend under your gentle yoke the unsullied body and the high-aspiring soul of youth, our country’s greatest treasure.

Young men, rise and rally under the lily-bearing standard of moral life—for the happiness of your body and soul, for your own future, for your country’s good.

SACRED WILL.

WHEN in China a virgin maiden dies, her relatives have the right to erect a triumphal gate in her honor with this superscription: "SHOENG DSHE," that is "THE SACRED WILL". The gate signifies that a holy will led that maiden unscathed through life. This "sacred will" is the guardian spirit of a young man who determines to hold his ground unflinchingly in the tempestuous days of youth. When such a soul departs this life and enters the land of eternal purity, he deserves that an arch of triumph be set up to his "life".

Tell me, my young friend, is this "sacred will" a reality within you? The sacred will to fight with an unflinching determination, an unflagging perseverance in the legion of the lily, in the company of those who, flushed with sacred ardor, uphold the snow-white standard of purity against all depravity and moral looseness. Or to battle in another company, in that of the returning, of the reforming, who having tasted the bitter gall of sin, learned to cling to the matchless happiness of a pure life with an undying love.

Surely, you will be steadfast, my friend! You will take care of your soul's purity! So it will be, will it not?

Consider it: purity is beauty—worthwhile indeed the struggle for it.

As I now imagine you standing before me and while taking leave once more gaze into your eyes and see you like a white sail unfurling in the wind, as the dawning promise of glorious things, but also

foresee the violent storms, the trials, and temptations that will set upon you in the days of youth, a fervent prayer is breaking forth from my heart:

My child, you're like a flower,
So pure, and sweet, and fair;
My heart wells up with tenderness
To see you standing there.

Upon your head I fain would lay
My hands, and soft repeat
A prayer that God may keep you still.
So pure and fair and sweet.

—Heine.

My dear friend! I have faith in you! Much faith! Now give me your hand . . . look into my eyes . . . a long, deep look . . . and say:

“I will continue on the path of purity.”

Or, if it ought to be said differently already, say it this way:

“I will again enlist in the legion of the lily . . .”

“I want to have . . . my will is to have a pure soul.”

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